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Balzac
Z. Marcas

CENTRAL

The Human Comedy

MILITARY AND POLITICAL LIFE

VOLUME III

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Honoré de Balzac

LA COMÉDIE HUMAINE

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IN CHESNAY WOOD

"The brigands, remaining masters of the field, thanks to their number, searched the wagon, which was driven into a ravine for that purpose. They covered the driver's head as a blind. They broke open the chests, the ground was strewn with bags of money."

The *Edition Définitive* of the *Comédie Humaine* by HONORÉ DE BALZAC, now for the first time completely translated into English.

C S

Z. MARCAS. THE OTHER SIDE OF CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY. FIRST EPISODE, MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE. SECOND EPISODE, THE NOVICE. IN ONE VOLUME. TRANSLATED BY GEORGE BURNHAM IVES, AND ILLUSTRATED WITH FOUR ETCHINGS.

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Z. MARCAS

TO MONSEIGNEUR LE COMTE GUILLAUME DE WURTEMBERG

As a token of the author's respectful gratitude.

DE BALZAC.

Z. MARCAS

*

"I have never seen anyone, even among the remarkable men of the age, whose appearance was more striking than that man's; a study of his features aroused at first a feeling of melancholy, and eventually caused an almost painful sensation. There was a certain harmony between the person and the name. The Z. that preceded the Marcas, that appeared in the superscription of his letters and was never forgotten in his signature, that final letter of the alphabet conveyed to the mind an indefinable suggestion of fatality.

"MARCAS! Repeat to yourself that name of two syllables: do you not detect a sinister meaning in it? Does it not seem to you that the man who bears it is destined to be martyrized? Although a strange and barbarous name, it is entitled none the less to be handed down to posterity; it is well put together, it is readily pronounced, it has the brevity desirable in illustrious names. Is it not as soft as it is strange? but has it not an unfinished sound to your ear? I would not like to take it upon myself to assert that names exercise no influence over destinies. Between the incidents of life and the names of men,

there are secret and inexplicable accords or visible differences that surprise one; it often happens that distant but potent correlations are disclosed. Our globe is full, everything clings to its place. Perhaps we shall go back some day to the occult sciences.

"Do you not see a disappointed twist in the formation of the Z? Does it not pursue the fortuitous and capricious zigzag course of a disturbed life? What wind has blown upon that letter, which begins hardly fifty words in any language in which it is used? Marcas's name was Zéphirin. Saint-Zéphirin is deeply venerated in Bretagne. Marcas was a Breton.

"Scrutinize that name once more: Z. Marcas! The man's whole life is comprised in that capricious union of the seven letters. Seven! the most significant of cabalistic numbers. The man died at thirty-five, so that his life was composed of seven lusters. Marcas! Do you not get the idea of some precious object broken by a fall, with or without a crash?

"I was finishing my legal studies in Paris, in 1836. I lived at that time on Rue Corneille, in a house entirely devoted to students' lodgings, one of the houses with a winding staircase at the rear, lighted at the bottom from the street, then by inner windows and at the top by a round window. There were forty rooms, furnished as rooms intended for students usually are. What more does youth need than was provided in those rooms? a bed, a few chairs, a commode, a mirror and a table. As soon as the

skies are clear, the student opens his window. But in that street there are no pretty neighbors to ogle. Across the street, the Odéon, long since closed, presents to the eye its already blackening walls, the tiny windows of its boxes, and its vast slated roof. I was not rich enough to have a good room, I was not able even to have a room to myself. Juste and I shared a room with two beds, on the fifth floor.

"On that side of the stairway there were no rooms but our own and another smaller one, occupied by our neighbor, Z. Marcas. Juste and I were for six months entirely unaware that we had such a neighbor. An old woman who managed the house had told us, to be sure, that the little room was occupied, but she had added that we should not be annoyed, as the occupant was an exceedingly quiet person. In fact, we did not meet our neighbor once during the first six months, and we heard no sound in his room, notwithstanding the thinness of the partition between us, which was one of the lath and plaster partitions so common in Paris houses.

"Our chamber, which was seven feet high, was hung with a wretched little blue flowered paper. The painted floor knew nothing of the polish that scrubbing imparts. We had a shabby list mat beside our beds. The fireplace flue entered the chimney too near the roof, and smoked so that we were compelled to put in a chimney-pot at our own expense. Our beds were painted wooden cots, like those used at boarding-schools. There was never anything on the mantel-shelf except two

copper candlesticks, sometimes with and sometimes without candles, our two pipes and some tobacco, loose or in a bag; then there were the little piles of ashes that our visitors deposited there or that we collected ourselves when smoking cigars. Two calico curtains slid upon rods at the window, on each side of which were two little cherry-wood bookcases, of a pattern familiar to all those who frequent the Latin quarter, in which we kept the few books essential for our studies. The ink in the inkstand was always like the thick lava in the crater of a volcano. May not any inkstand to-day become a Vesuvius? The quills, when twisted, served to clean out the stems of our pipes. In opposition to the general rule in banking, paper was even scarcer with us than coin.

"How can people expect to induce young men to remain in such furnished apartments? So the students do their studying in cafés, at the theatre, in the paths of the Luxembourg, in grisettes' rooms, anywhere, even at the School of Law, except in their horrible rooms—horrible when it is a question of studying there, but delightful when they meet there to prattle and smoke. Place a cloth on yonder table, imagine thereon the hastily ordered dinner from the best restaurant in the quarter, with covers laid for four, and two girls,—have that domestic scene lithographed and a saint cannot refrain from smiling at it.

"We thought of nothing but our own entertainment. Our reason for leading such a disorderly life

was founded upon most serious consideration of what policy counsels at the present time. Juste and myself could see no place for ourselves in the two professions which our parents compelled us to embrace. There are a hundred lawyers, a hundred doctors for every vacancy. The crowd blocks those two roads, which seem to lead to fortune and which are really two arenas: they fight and kill each other there, not with side arms or with firearms, but by intrigue and slander, by terrible labor, by campaigns in the domain of intelligence, as deadly as the Italian campaigns were to the republican troops. To-day, when everything is resolved into a contest of intellects, one must be able to remain in one's chair in front of a table for forty-eight hours in succession, as a general sometimes remains two whole days in the saddle. The great throng of aspirants has compelled the medical profession to divide itself into categories: there is the physician who writes, the physician who teaches, the political physician and the practising physician—four different ways of being a physician, four sections already full. As for the fifth division—doctors who sell remedies,—there is considerable rivalry there, and they fight with disgusting placards posted on the blank walls of Paris.—In all the courts there are as many lawyers as causes. The lawyer is thrown back upon journalism, politics, literature. Even the State, besieged by applications for the smallest places in the magistracy, has ended by requiring the petitioners to possess a considerable fortune. The pear-shaped

head of the son of a wealthy grocer will be given the preference over the square head of a man of talent without a sou. By straining every nerve, by putting forth all his energy, a young man who starts from zero may find himself, at the end of ten years, below his starting point. To-day talent must have the good luck that brings success to incapacity; nay, more, if it lacks the mean qualities that give success to mediocrity, it will never succeed.

"If we had an intimate acquaintance with our epoch, we knew ourselves equally well, and we preferred the idleness of thinkers to a purposeless activity, indifference and pleasure to fruitless labors which would have tired out our courage and worn away the keen edge of our intellect. We had analyzed social conditions as we sauntered through the streets, laughing and smoking. Our reflections and observations were none the less profound and judicious for being evolved under such conditions.

"While remarking the servitude to which youth is condemned, we were amazed at the brutal indifference of the ruling powers to everything connected with the mind, with the thought, with poesy. What meaning glances Juste and I often exchanged as we read the newspapers, ascertaining what was happening in the political world, running through the debates in the Chambers, discussing the conduct of a court whose wilful ignorance can be compared only to the vapidity of the courtiers, to the mediocrity of the men who hedge about the

new throne, all without wit or talent, without learning or fame, without influence or eminence. What a eulogy of the court of Charles X. is the present court, if it can properly be so called! What hatred for the country is shown in the naturalization of the commonplace foreigners, men of no talent, who are enthroned in the Chamber of Peers! What a perversion of justice! What an insult to the rising generation, to native-born ambition! We looked at all these things as at a play, and we groaned at them without coming to any decision as to our own course.

"Juste, whom none came to consult, and who would never have sought patients, was, at twenty-five, a profound politician, a man of wonderful aptitude in grasping the distant connection between present and future conditions. He told me in 1831 what was likely to happen and did actually happen: the assassinations, the conspiracies, the reign of the Jews, the labored movements of France, the famine of great minds in the upper spheres, and the abundance of talent in the lowlands, where the noblest courage is extinguished under the ashes of the cigar. What should he do? His family wanted him to be a physician. Did not that mean that he must wait twenty years for a clientage? Do you know what has become of him? No? Well, he is a physician; but he has left France and is in Asia. At this very moment he may be dying of fatigue in a desert or falling beneath the blows of a horde of savages, or he may be prime minister to some

Indian prince. My own vocation is action. Leaving college at the age of twenty, it was not possible for me to enter the army except as a common soldier; and, being disgusted by the gloomy prospect afforded by the legal profession, I have acquired the knowledge necessary for a sailor. I propose to follow Juste's example, I am leaving France where one expends in making a place for one's self the time and energy essential for the loftiest achievements. Do as I do, my friends; I am going where a man may guide his destiny as he wills.

"These momentous resolutions were formed deliberately in the little room in the house on Rue Corneille, or going to the Bal Musard, paying court to merry damsels, leading a wild and apparently reckless life. Our resolutions, our reflections wavered for a long while. Marcas, our neighbor, was, in a certain sense, the guide who led us to the brink of the precipice or the roaring torrent, and who caused us to measure its extent, who showed us in advance what our fate would be if we should let ourselves fall into it. It was he who put us on our guard against the habit of postponing the day of reckoning, which a man contracts with increasing want and which hope seems to justify, by accepting precarious positions from which he has to struggle to extricate himself, by allowing himself to float with the current of Paris, that monstrous harlot who takes you up and drops you, smiles upon you and turns her back upon you with equal facility, who wears out the firmest wills by her captious

caprices—Paris, where misfortune is the kept mistress of chance.

"Our first meeting with Marcas dazzled us, so to speak. On returning from our respective schools, before the dinner hour, we always went up to our room and remained there a moment, waiting for each other, to find out if our plans for the evening had undergone any change. One day, at four o'clock, Juste saw Marcas on the stairway, and I met him on the street. It was in November and Marcas had no cloak; he wore shoes with heavy soles, trousers with feet, made of double-milled cassimere, a blue coat buttoned to the neck and with a square collar, which gave him something of a military air, especially as he wore a black cravat. There was nothing remarkable in the costume, but it accorded well with the man's bearing and his face. My first impression at sight of him was neither surprise, nor astonishment, nor melancholy, nor interest, nor pity, but a curiosity which partook of all those emotions. He was walking slowly, at a pace that indicated profound melancholy, with his head bent forward, but not hanging after the manner of a man conscious of guilt. It was a large, powerful head, which seemed to contain the treasures necessary to one whose ambition was of the first order, and it was apparently laden with thoughts; it bent beneath the weight of mental suffering, but there was not the slightest trace of remorse in its features. The character of the face will be understood from a single word of description. According to a theory

much in vogue, every human face bears some resemblance to an animal. Marcas's animal was the lion. His hair resembled a mane, his nose was short, flat, broad and split at the end like a lion's; his forehead was divided into two mighty lobes, like a lion's, by a deep furrow. Lastly, his hairy cheek-bones, to which the thinness of his cheeks gave added prominence, his enormous mouth and his hollow cheeks were creased by folds that imparted a rugged sternness to his expression, while their effect was heightened by a coloring in which yellowish tones predominated. That almost awe-inspiring face seemed illumined by two lights, the eyes, black as jet, but of infinite sweetness, calm and deep, full of thought. If we may be permitted to use the expression, his eyes were humiliated. Marcas was afraid to look at people, not so much on his own account as on account of those upon whom his fascinating glance might rest; he possessed a power which he did not care to exercise; he spared those who passed him by, he dreaded to be noticed. It was not modesty, but resignation, not the Christ-like resignation which implies charity, but resignation advised by the reason, which has pointed out the momentary uselessness of talent, the impossibility of attaining and living in the sphere for which we are fitted. That glance could emit lightning at certain moments. From that mouth issued a voice of thunder, which was much like Mirabeau's.

"'I have just seen a remarkable man in the street,' I said to Juste as I entered the room.

"'It must be our neighbor,' replied Juste, and he proceeded to give an accurate description of the man I had met.—'A man who lives like a wood louse must look like that,' he said in conclusion.

"'What humility and what grandeur!'

"'One is a consequence of the other.'

"'How many disappointed hopes! how many plans defeated!'

"'Seven leagues of ruins! obelisks, palaces, towers: the ruins of Palmyra in the desert,' said Juste jestingly.

"We dubbed our neighbor the Ruins of Palmyra. When we went out to dine in the wretched restaurant on Rue de la Harpe, where we were subscribers, we inquired the name of number 37, and we then first heard the witching name of Z. Marcas. Like the children that we were, we repeated the name a hundred times or more with the most varied intonations, absurd or melancholy, the pronunciation lending itself readily to our sport. At times, Juste succeeded in uttering the Z with the sound made by a rocket when it is discharged, and, after making a brilliant display of the first syllable, he depicted a fall by the abrupt, hollow tone in which he pronounced the last.

"'Ah ça! where and how does he live?'

"Between that question and the harmless espionage induced by curiosity, there was only the brief interval required to put our plan in execution. Instead of taking a stroll, we returned to our room, each armed with a novel. And we read, listening

the while. We heard, in the profound silence of our attic, the soft, regular sound produced by the respiration of a sleeping man.

"'He is asleep,' I said to Juste, noticing the sound first.

"'At seven o'clock!' replied the Doctor.

"That was the name I gave to Juste, who called me the Keeper of the Seals.

"'A man must be very unhappy to sleep as much as our neighbor sleeps,' I said, jumping on the commode, armed with an enormous knife, in the handle of which there was a corkscrew.

"I made a round hole as large as a five-sou piece in the partition. I had not reflected that there was no light in the room, and when I put my eye to the hole I saw nothing but darkness. About one o'clock in the morning, when we had finished our novels and were preparing to retire, we heard a noise in our neighbor's room; he rose, struck a match and lighted his candle. I remounted the commode. I then saw Marcas seated at his table copying legal documents. His room was half the size of ours, the bed was in a recess beside the door, for the space taken by the corridor, which ended at his den, was subtracted from it; but the lot of land on which the house was built was evidently a trapezium in shape and the party wall in the rear of his attic was narrower than the front wall of the house. He had no fireplace, but a small white porcelain stove, covered with green spots, the funnel of which went out through a hole in the roof. Wretched reddish

curtains hung at the window, which was in the rear wall. An armchair, a table, a common chair and a rickety night table completed the furniture of the room. He kept his linen in a cupboard cut in the wall. The paper on the walls was hideously ugly. It was evident that no one but a servant had ever occupied the room until Marcas came there.

" 'What did you see?' the Doctor asked me as I descended from my perch.

" 'Look for yourself!' I replied.

"The next morning at nine o'clock Marcas was in bed. He had breakfasted on a Bologna sausage: we saw on a plate, among crumbs of bread, the remains of that delicacy, which was well known to us. Marcas was asleep. He did not wake until eleven. He returned to the copy he had been at work on the night before, which lay on the table. When we went downstairs we inquired the price of the room and learned that it was let for fifteen francs per month. In a few days we were fully acquainted with Z. Marcas's mode of life. He made copies, at so much the line doubtless, for a contractor for clerical work who lived in the courtyard of Sainte-Chapelle; he worked half the night; after sleeping from six o'clock to ten, he rose and worked again until three o'clock; then he went out to deliver his copies before dinner, and dined at Mizerai's on Rue Michel-le-Comte, for nine sous a meal; then he went home and to bed at six o'clock. We were satisfied that Marcas did not say fifteen sentences in

a month; he never spoke to anyone, nor did he ever say a word to himself in his miserable garret.

"'The Ruins of Palmyra are terribly silent, there's no doubt about that!' cried Juste.

"There was something profoundly significant in this silence on the part of a man whose exterior was so imposing. Sometimes, when we met him, we exchanged glances pregnant with thought, but followed by no treaty. By insensible degrees we came to feel a profound admiration for the man, although neither of us could understand its cause. Was it his simple habits, his monastic regularity, his recluse-like frugality, his unexacting occupation, which allowed his mind to remain inactive or to work, and which denoted either that he was awaiting some lucky chance or that he had determined what direction to give his life? After walking a long time among the Ruins of Palmyra, we forgot them, we were so young! Then came the carnival, the Parisian carnival, which will eventually overshadow the carnival of Venice, and will attract all Europe to Paris a few years hence, if officious prefects of police do not interfere. Gambling ought to be tolerated during the carnival; but the imbecile moralists who have caused its suppression are foolish schemers who will not rehabilitate that necessary canker until it is proved that France leaves millions of money in Germany.

"That joyous carnival season brought great destitution upon us as upon all students. We had disposed of all our objects of luxury; we had sold

one of our coats, one pair of boots, one of our waistcoats, one of everything that we had in duplicate, except our friends. We lived on bread and scraps of pork, we walked cautiously, we worked; we owed two months' rent and we were certain of having an account of sixty or eighty lines each with the concierge, amounting to forty or fifty francs in all. We were no longer brusque or merry as we crossed the tiled landing at the foot of the staircase, and we often went from the lower step into the street at a single bound. On the day when the tobacco for our pipes was exhausted we noticed that for several days we had been eating our bread without any sort of butter. Our sadness was heart-rending.

"'No more tobacco!' said the Doctor.

"'No more cloak!' said the Keeper of the Seals.

"'Ah! you rascals, you dressed like Longjumeau postilions! you would array yourselves in bargemen's costume, sup in the morning and breakfast in the evening at Véry's, and sometimes at the *Rocher de Cancale!*—To your dry crust, messieurs! You ought,' I said, raising my voice, 'to lie under your beds, you are unworthy to lie on top of them.'

"'Very true, O Keeper of the Seals, but there's no more tobacco!' said Juste.

"'It is time to write to our mothers, our aunts, our sisters, that we haven't any linen, that life in Paris would wear out knitted iron wire. We will solve an interesting problem in chemistry by changing linen into cash.'

"'We must live until we get their reply.'

"'Very well, I will go and negotiate a loan with such of my friends as have not yet exhausted their capital.'

"'What will you get?'

"'Get! ten francs!' I replied proudly.

"Marcas had overheard everything; it was noon; he knocked at our door and said:

"'Here is some tobacco, messieurs; you can return it to me when convenient.'

"We were struck dumb—not by the offer, which we accepted, but by the fulness and depth and rich quality of that voice, which can be compared to nothing but the fourth string of Paganini's violin. Marcas disappeared without awaiting our thanks. Juste and I gazed at each other in perfect silence. To be assisted by someone evidently poorer than ourselves! Juste bestirred himself to write to all the branches of his family, and I went to negotiate the loan. I procured twenty francs from a native of my own province. In those unhappy good old days gambling still flourished, and in its veins, hard as the *gangues* of Brazil, young men, risking little, seized the chance of winning a few pieces of gold. My compatriot had some Turkish tobacco brought from Constantinople by a naval officer; he gave me about as much as we had received from Z. Marcas. I brought the rich cargo back to port, and we made a triumphal visit to our neighbor to carry him a sumptuous blond periwig of Turkish tobacco in return for his caporal.

"'You did not wish to owe me anything,' he said; 'you give me gold for copper; you are children —good fellows—'

"Those three sentences, uttered in different tones, were differently accented. The words were nothing, but the accent—Ah! the accent made us friends of ten years' standing. Marcas had hidden his copies when he heard us coming, so we realized that it would be an impertinence to mention his means of existence, and we were ashamed of having played the spy upon him. His cupboard was open, it contained only two shirts, a white cravat and a razor. The razor made me shudder. A mirror that was worth perhaps a hundred sous was hanging by the window. There was a sort of wild grandeur in the man's simple and infrequent gestures. The Doctor and I looked at each other as if to decide how we should reply. Juste, seeing that I was tongue-tied, said to Marcas, in a jesting tone:

"'Does monsieur cultivate literature?'

"'I have been careful to do nothing of the sort!' replied Marcas, 'or I should not be so rich.'

"'I thought,' said I, 'that nothing but poetry, in these days, could keep a man in such wretched quarters as ours.'

"My remark made Marcas smile, and the smile gave charm to his yellow face.

"'Ambition is no less harsh to those who do not succeed,' he said. 'So do you, who are beginning life, follow the beaten paths; do not think of becoming men of mark, it would be your ruin!'

"'Do you advise us to remain what we are?' said the Doctor with a smile.

"There is such a childlike, infectious charm in the jesting of youth, that Juste's question made Marcas smile once more.

"'What can have happened to teach you such shocking philosophy as that?' I asked him.

"'I forgot once more that chance is the result of a vast equation of which we do not know all the roots. When one starts from zero to arrive at unity, the chances against success are incalculable. For the ambitious, Paris is an immense roulette table, and every young man believes that he has found a winning combination.'

"He offered us the tobacco I had given him and invited us to smoke with him; the Doctor went to get our pipes, Marcas loaded his, then came and sat down in our room, bringing the tobacco: he had only one chair besides his armchair. Nimble as a squirrel, Juste ran downstairs and reappeared with a waiter bringing three bottles of Bordeaux, a piece of Brie cheese and some bread.

"'The deuce, fifteen francs!' I said to myself, and I was right to a sou.

"Juste gravely deposited the five remaining francs on the mantel.

"There is an immeasurable difference between the man in society and the man who lives very near to nature. When he was once captured, Toussaint Louverture died without uttering a word. Napoléon, when he was once upon his sea-girt rock, chattered

like a magpie; he tried to explain. Z. Marcas committed the same mistake, but for our benefit only. Silence in all its majesty is found only in the savage. There is no criminal, who, when he has the opportunity to let his secrets fall into the basket with his head, does not feel the purely social need of telling them to some one. I am wrong. We have seen one of the Iroquois of Faubourg Saint-Germain place Parisian nature on a level with the nature of the wild man: a man, a republican, a conspirator, a Frenchman, an old man, surpassed all that we know of the steadfastness of the negro, and all the tranquil contempt in defeat that Cooper attributes to the Redskins. Morey, the Guatimozin of the Mountain, maintained an attitude unparalleled in the annals of European justice.

"This is what Marcas told us that morning, interspersing his narrative with slices of bread spread with cheese and washed down with divers glasses of wine. All the tobacco disappeared. Now and then the cabs that crossed Place de l'Odéon and the omnibuses that ploughed through it, added their dull rumbling, as if to show that Paris was still there.

"His family was of Vitré, his father and mother lived on fifteen hundred francs a year. He had been educated free of charge in a seminary and had refused to become a priest: he had felt within himself the ardent heat of an overpowering ambition, and he had come on foot to Paris, at the age of twenty, possessed of two hundred francs. He had taken his degree in law, working meanwhile for a

solicitor, whose head clerk he had become. He had a doctor's degree in law, he was familiar with the old and the new legislation, he could trace them both back to the most famous lawyers. He knew the law of nations and was familiar with all the European treaties and the principles of international comedy. He had studied men and things in five capitals: London, Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Constantinople. No one knew the precedents of the Chamber better than he. For five years he had *done* the Chambers for a daily paper. He was an admirable extemporaneous speaker, and could talk a long while in that deep melodious voice which had penetrated to our hearts. He proved to us by the story of his life that he was a great orator, concise, serious, and still possessed of persuasive eloquence; he suggested Berryer in his fervid periods and his power to sway the masses; he resembled Monsieur Thiers in finesse and adroitness, but he would have been less diffuse, less embarrassed to conclude. He expected to attain power at once without being hampered by doctrines necessarily espoused at first by one in opposition, and likely to prove an annoyance later to the minister.

"Marcas had learned everything that a genuine statesman ought to know; his astonishment was unbounded therefore when he had occasion to probe the profound ignorance of the men prominent in public affairs in France. If his vocation had counseled study, nature had been very lavish of

her gifts, she had given him all those qualities that cannot be acquired: keen penetration, self-control, mental dexterity, swiftness of judgment, decision, and, above all, fertility of methods, which is the genius of such men as he.

"When he deemed himself sufficiently armed, Marcas found France torn by the internal dissensions born of the triumph of the Orléans branch over the elder branch. The stage of political struggles has evidently changed. Civil war cannot last long in these days, it will not again extend to the provinces. There will be only one more contest in France, of short duration, at the very seat of government, and it will put an end to the moral warfare which eminent minds will have waged previously. This state of things will endure as long as France retains its strange form of government, which is not analogous to that of any other country; there is no more resemblance between the English government and ours than between the two countries themselves. Marcas's place therefore was in the political hurly-burly. As he was poor and unable to procure an election, he must make himself manifest suddenly. He resolved to make the most costly of all sacrifices to a man of superior talents—to subordinate himself to some wealthy and ambitious deputy, for whom he would work. Another Bonaparte, he looked about for his Barras; this other Colbert hoped to find a Mazarin. He rendered enormous services; he rendered them—and, by the way, he did not strut, and play the great man and shriek ingratitude

—he rendered them in the hope that his patron would put him in a position to be chosen deputy: Marcas desired nothing more than the loan of a sufficient sum to purchase a house in Paris, in order to satisfy the requirements of the law. Richard III. wanted nothing but his horse.

"In three years Marcas created one of the fifty or more alleged political notabilities who are the rackets with which two cunning hands toss cabinet portfolios back and forth, precisely as the manager of a puppet-show jostles Punch and the police-officer against each other on his open-air stage, hoping always to increase his receipts. That man existed only by favor of Marcas; but he had just enough wit to appreciate the worth of his editor, to know that Marcas, when he had once attained power, would remain as an indispensable man, while he would be banished to the polar colonies of the Luxembourg. He resolved therefore to place insuperable obstacles in the way of his manager's advancement, and concealed that thought beneath the shibboleth of absolute devotion. Like all small-minded men, he had marvelous skill in dissembling; and then he advanced rapidly in the path of ingratitude, for he must kill off Marcas, in order not to be killed off by him. Those two men, apparently so closely united, hated each other as soon as one of them had deceived the other. The statesman was a member of a ministry, Marcas remained in the opposition to prevent any attack upon his minister, for whom, by a master-stroke, he obtained

laudatory words from the opposition. To avoid rewarding his lieutenant, the statesman alleged the impracticability of giving a place to a member of the opposition abruptly and without clever manœuvring. Marcas had relied upon an office to put him in position to obtain, by means of a marriage, the eligibility he so earnestly desired. He was thirty-two years old, he foresaw the speedy dissolution of the Chamber. Having caught the minister in the act of dealing in bad faith with him, he overthrew him, or at all events contributed largely to his fall, and rolled him in the mire.

"Every fallen minister must, in order to regain his position, show that he is to be feared; this man, whom the royal eloquence had intoxicated, who had believed himself to be safe in his ministerial office for a long while to come, realized the mistake he had made; when he confessed it, he rendered some slight service in a financial way to Marcas, who had run in debt during the struggle. He gave his support to the newspaper on which Marcas was employed, and had him made its manager. Although he despised the man, Marcas, who was accepting earnest-money, so to speak, consented to seem to make common cause with the fallen minister. Without unmasking as yet all the batteries of his superiority, Marcas pushed forward farther than before; he displayed half of his cunning. The ministry lasted only a hundred and eighty days; it was overwhelmed. Marcas, having come in contact with certain deputies, had handled them like putty,

leaving in the minds of all of them an exalted idea of his talents. Once more his manikin had a seat in a ministry, and the newspaper became a ministerial organ. The ministry combined it with another sheet, for the sole purpose of crushing Marcas, who, as a result of the fusion, was obliged to make way for a rich and insolent rival, already well-known and with his foot in the stirrup. Marcas was thrown back into the most profound destitution; his arrogant protégé well knew into what an abyss he was hurling him. Where should he go? The ministerial journals, being secretly warned against him, would have none of him. The organs of the opposition were reluctant to admit him to their offices. Marcas could not go over to the republicans or the legitimists, two parties whose triumph means the overturn of existing institutions.

" 'Ambitious men love realities,' he said to us with a smile.

"He made a living by occasional articles relative to certain commercial enterprises. He worked upon one of the encyclopædias which speculation, not learning, attempted to produce. At last a newspaper was founded, which was destined to last only two years, but for which Marcas's services as editor were sought. Thereupon he renewed his acquaintance with the minister's enemies, he was able to join the party that sought the downfall of the ministry; and when his pickaxe once had an opportunity to work, the administration was demolished.

"Marcas's newspaper had been dead six months;

he had been unable to find employment anywhere, he was represented as a dangerous man, calumny was busy with his name: he had wrecked a vast financial and industrial undertaking by an article or two and a pamphlet. He was known to be the mouthpiece of a banker, who, it was said, had paid him handsomely and from whom he expected some favors, of course, in return for his devotion. Disgusted with men and things, exhausted by a five years' struggle, Marcas, who was looked upon as a *condottiere* rather than a great captain, crushed by the necessity of earning his bread, which prevented him from gaining ground, driven to despair by the influence of money on men's thoughts, and reduced to the most horrible destitution—Marcas, I say, had retreated to his attic, where he earned thirty sous a day, the amount absolutely necessary for his needs. Meditation had stretched a desert, as it were, about him. He read the newspapers in order to keep abreast of the times. Pozzo di Borgo was in the same plight for some time. Marcas was evidently maturing plans for a serious attack, he was accustoming himself to dissimulation perhaps, and was chastising himself for his errors by Pythagorean silence. He did not disclose his reasons to us.

"It is impossible to describe the high comedy scenes that lay beneath this algebraic condensation of his life: the fruitless patrolling at the feet of elusive fortune, the long pursuits through the Parisian underbrush, the hurried journeys of the petitioner, gasping for breath, the experiments tried

upon idiots, the lofty projects rendered abortive by the influence of a foolish woman, the conferences with rich tradesmen, who insisted that their funds should yield peerages and boxes at the opera, as well as large interest; the hopes that reached the summit of fulfilment only to fall back upon the breakers; the marvels performed in reconciling opposed interests, which separated after walking happily together for a week; the constantly recurring chagrin of seeing an imbecile decorated with the Legion of Honor, and, although ignorant as a clerk, preferred to the man of talent; and then what Marcas called the stratagems of idiocy: you make an impression on a man, he appears to be convinced, he nods his head, and everything seems to be all right; the next morning that elastic mass, compressed for a moment, has resumed its former shape during the night, it is puffed up even more than before, and you must begin anew; you work away at it until you find that you are not dealing with a man at all, but with a gummy substance that dries up in the sun.

"These innumerable discomfitures, this immense loss of human strength wasted upon barren fields, the difficulty of effecting any good result, the incredible ease with which one can do evil; the two great games he had played, twice won, twice lost; the hatred of a statesman, a blockhead with a painted mask and false hair, but a man in whom people believed;—all these things, great and small, had not discouraged Marcas, but had prostrated him for the moment. In the days when money had

come to him, his hands had not retained it, he had given himself the divine pleasure of sending it all to his family, his sisters, his brothers, his old father. Like the fallen Napoléon, he needed only thirty sous a day, and any man of energy can always earn his thirty sous in Paris.

"When Marcas had finished the story of his life, which was interspersed with reflections, maxims and remarks that indicated the great politician, it required only a few questions and answers concerning the trend of affairs in France and in Europe, to convince us that Marcas was a genuine statesman, for men may be quickly and readily judged as soon as they consent to enter the domain of difficulties: there is a *shibboleth* for men of superior mind, and we were of the tribe of modern Levites, but were not yet within the temple. As I have told you, our frivolous life concealed the projects which Juste for his part has already executed, and those which I am on the point of putting into execution.

"After the conversation I have described, we all went out together, and, pending the arrival of the dinner hour, we walked in the Luxembourg garden, notwithstanding the cold. During that walk our conversation, still serious in tone, touched upon the deplorable facts of the political situation. Each of us contributed his observation or his aphorism, his jest or his maxim. We no longer dwelt exclusively upon the life of colossal proportions which Marcas, the soldier of political battles, had depicted to us. It was no longer the depressing monologue of the

navigator stranded in the garret of the Hôtel Corneille, but a dialogue in which two well informed young men, who had formed their own opinions concerning the times in which they lived, sought, under the guidance of a man of talent, to cast some light upon their own future.

"'Why,' Juste asked him, 'did you not patiently await an opportunity, why did you not imitate the only man who has succeeded in keeping his head always above water since the Revolution of July?'

"'Did I not tell you that we do not know all the roots of chance? Carrel was in a position identical with that of the orator you mention. That dark-browed young man, that caustic mind carried a whole government in his brain; the man you refer to has no other idea than to ride *en croupe* behind every event: of the two, Carrel was the strong man. Well, one becomes a minister, Carrel remains a journalist; the incomplete but crafty man lives; Carrel dies. I ask you to observe that that man has spent fifteen years in making his way and that he has as yet only partially succeeded; he may be caught and crushed between two wagons loaded with intrigues on the high road to power. He has no house: he has not, like Metternich, the palace of favor, or, like Villèle, the sheltering roof of a compact majority. I do not believe that the present form of government will exist ten years hence. But, even supposing that that melancholy joy is in store for me, I shall not be in a position to avail myself of it, for, in order not to be swept away in the upheaval

which I foresee, I must already have attained a lofty position.'

"'What upheaval?' said Juste.

"'AUGUST, 1830,' replied Marcas solemnly, stretching out his hand toward Paris,—'AUGUST, 1830, brought about by youth, which bound the sheaves, by intelligence, which ripened the harvest, forgot the part borne by youth and intelligence! Youth will burst like the boiler of a steam-engine. Youth has no outlet in France, it is heaping up an avalanche of unappreciated talents, of legitimate, restless ambitions; it marries seldom, families do not know what to do with their children. What shock will shake those masses? I do not know; but they will rush headlong into the present state of affairs and reduce it to chaos. The laws of fluctuation govern successive generations, and those laws the Roman Empire disregarded when the barbarians appeared on the scene. To-day the barbarians are the neglected talents. The laws of overflow are acting at this moment, slowly, secretly, among us. The government is the great culprit, it slights the two powers to which it owes everything, it has allowed its hands to be bound by the absurdities of the contract, it is all ready to be victimized. Louis XIV., Napoléon, England, were and are greedy to obtain intelligent youth. In France, youth is condemned by the new régime, by the hateful conditions of the elective principle, by the vices of the ministerial constitution. If you examine the make-up of the Elective Chamber, you will find no deputies of

thirty or younger: the youth of Richelieu and Mazarin, the youth of Turenne and Colbert, the youth of Pitt and Saint-Just, the youth of Napoléon and Prince Metternich would find no place there. Burke, Sheridan, Fox could find no seat in that chamber. Even if the political majority had been placed at twenty-one years and all restrictions of every sort upon eligibility had been removed, the departments would still have chosen the present deputies, men without any sort of political talent, incapable of speaking without murdering the grammar, and among whom hardly a single statesman has appeared in ten years. We can divine the causes of future events, but we cannot foresee the events themselves. At this moment the whole younger generation is being driven into republicanism, because it must inevitably see in the republic its emancipation. It will remember the young representatives of the people and the young generals of a past age! The folly of the government is comparable only to its avarice.'

"That day had a marked influence on our lives. Marcas strengthened our determination to leave France, where young men of eminent capacity, overflowing with energy, were crushed under the weight of upstart mediocrities, jealous and insatiable. We dined together on Rue de la Harpe. Thenceforth we felt the most respectful affection for him; he, in return, accorded us most efficient assistance in the sphere of ideas. The man knew everything, he had gone to the bottom of everything. He

studied the political globe for us, looking for the country where the chances were most numerous and at the same time most favorable to the success of our plans. He marked out for us the points to which our studies should be directed; he urged us to hasten, dwelling upon the value of time, insisting that the emigration would certainly take place, that its effect would be to rob France of the cream of her energetic, youthful minds; that those minds, necessarily keen and far-seeing, would choose the best places and that it was most important to anticipate them. After that, we often sat together far into the night, by lamplight. Our generous master wrote several notes for us—two for Juste and three for me—which contain admirable counsel, the information that experience alone can give, the landmarks that only genius can set up. In those pages, saturated with tobacco smoke and covered with hieroglyphic characters, there are signposts to fortune, predictions of unerring accuracy. There are prophetic suggestions concerning certain points in America and Asia, which were fulfilled before and after Juste and I were able to start.

"Marcas had reached, like ourselves, the lowest stage of destitution; to be sure he earned enough to keep him alive, but he had neither linen nor clothes nor shoes. He did not pretend to be better than he was: he had dreamed of a luxurious life when he dreamed of wielding power. Therefore he did not recognize himself as the real Marcas. He abandoned his exterior to the caprice of real life. He lived by

the breath of his ambition, he dreamed of vengeance and rebuked himself for yielding to so despicable a sentiment. The true statesman should be, above all things, indifferent to vulgar passions; he ought, like the scientist, to take a passionate interest in naught besides matters pertaining to his special science. It was in those days of poverty that Marcas seemed to us truly great, even awe-inspiring; there was something terrifying in his glance, which viewed a different world from that upon which the eyes of ordinary mortals rest. He was to us a subject of study and astonishment, for youth—which of us has not experienced it?—youth feels keenly the need of admiration; it loves to cling to somebody, it is naturally inclined to subordinate itself to men whom it deems superior, even as it devotes itself to great things. Our wonder was aroused most of all by his indifference in the matter of sentiment: woman had never disturbed his life. When we mentioned that everlasting subject of conversation among Frenchmen, he said simply:

"'Dresses cost too much!'

"He saw the glance Juste and I exchanged, and he continued:

"'Yes, they cost too much. The woman you buy, and she is the least expensive, wants a great deal of money; the woman who gives herself to you takes all your time! Woman extinguishes all energy, all ambition. Napoléon reduced her to what she should be. In that respect he was great, he did not yield to the ruinous fancies of

Louis XIV. and Louis XV.; but he loved in secret, none the less.'

"We discovered that, like Pitt, who took England to wife, Marcas wore France on his heart; he worshiped his fatherland as an idol; he had not a single thought that was not for his country. His frenzy at the thought that he held in his hands the remedy for the disease whose virulence saddened him, and that he had not the power to apply it, gnawed at his heart incessantly; but that frenzy was made even more acute by the inferiority of France as compared to Russia and England. France in the third rank! That exclamation constantly recurred in his conversation. The internal malady of his country had attacked his entrails. He characterized as the petty bickerings of a street porter the disputes of the court with the Chamber, evidenced by the incessant changes and agitation, which impaired the prosperity of the country.

"'They give us peace by discounting the future,' he said.

"One evening Juste and I were busy at work and absolutely silent. Marcas had risen to work at his copying, for he had refused our services, despite our insistence. We had offered to divide his task with him, so that he would have only a third of the monotonous work to do; he lost his temper, so we insisted no farther. We heard the sound of fine boots in our corridor, and we raised our heads and looked at each other. Somebody knocked at

Marcas's door, the key of which was always left in the lock. We heard our great man say:

"'Come in!'

"Then:

"'You here, monsieur?'

"'Myself,' replied the ex-minister.

"It was the obscure martyr's Diocletian.

"He and our neighbor talked together for some time in undertones. Suddenly Marcas,—whose voice we had heard only at rare intervals, as is usually the case in an interview in which the one who seeks it begins by making a preliminary statement,—burst out at a proposition which we could not hear.

"'You would laugh at me,' he said, 'if I trusted you. The Jesuits have gone by, but Jesuitism is everlasting. There is no good faith either in your Machiavelianism or in your generosity. You know what to expect; but no one knows what to expect with you. Your court is composed of owls who are afraid of the light, of old men who tremble before the younger generation or else give no thought to it. The government models itself on the court. You went forth to seek the remains of the Empire, as the Restoration enrolled the sharpshooters of Louis XIV. Thus far the backward movements of fear and cowardice have been taken for the manœuvres of skilful generalship; but the dangers will come, and the youth will rise as in 1790. They did grand things in those days. At this moment you change ministers as a sick man changes his position in bed.

These fluctuations display the weakness of your government. You have a system of political chicanery which will be turned against you, for France will tire of this shuffling. France will not tell you that it is tired, no one ever knows how he dies, the wherefore is the business of the historian; but you will certainly die because you did not call upon the youth of France to exert its strength and its energy, its loyalty and its ardor; because you hated capable men, because you did not with loving hand select them from that glorious generation, because you preferred mediocrity in everything. You come to ask for my support; but you belong to that incapable mass, rendered hideous by self-interest, which is trembling and shriveling up, and which, because it is dwindling away to nothing, seeks to make France do the same. My energetic nature, my ideas would have the effect of a poison on you; twice you have tricked me, twice I have overturned you, as you know. It must be a very serious matter that can bring us together a third time. I would kill myself if I allowed myself to be made a dupe, for I should despair of myself: I should be the culprit, not you.'

"Thereupon we heard the most humble words, the most heartfelt entreaties not to deprive the country of his superior talents. He spoke of the country, and Marcas uttered a significant *Oho!*—he laughed in the face of his pretended patron. The statesman became more explicit; he acknowledged the superiority of his former adviser, he agreed to

put him in a position to remain in the administration, to become a deputy; then he offered him an important office, saying to him that thenceforth he, the minister, would subordinate himself to one whose lieutenant and nothing more he was qualified to be. He was included in the new ministerial combination, and he did not choose to return to power unless Marcas had a place suited to his deserts; he had mentioned that condition and Marcas had been included as a necessity.

"Marcas refused.

" 'I have never been placed in a position to fulfil my obligations, here is an opportunity to be faithful to my promises, and you fail me!'

"Marcas made no reply to this last sentence. We heard the boots again in the corridor, and the sound moved toward the staircase.

" 'Marcas! Marcas!' we cried in unison, rushing into his room, 'why do you refuse? He was acting in good faith. His conditions are honorable. Furthermore, you will see the ministers.'

"In a twinkling we gave Marcas a hundred reasons. The future minister's words rang true; as far as we could judge without seeing him, he was not lying.

" 'I have no clothes!' Marcas replied.

" 'Rely on us,' said Juste, glancing at me.

"Marcas had the courage to trust us, a gleam shot from his eyes, he ran his hand through his hair and threw it back from his forehead with a gesture denoting faith in good fortune, and when he had, so

to speak, removed the veil from his face, we saw a man who was an utter stranger to us; a sublime Marcas, Marcas with power in his grasp, the mind in its element, the bird restored to freedom, the fish back in the water, the horse galloping over the prairie. It was momentary; the brow became dark once more, he had a sort of vision of his destiny. Limping doubt followed close behind white-winged hope. We left the man to himself.

" 'Well,' I said to the Doctor, 'we have promised, but how are we to do it?'

" 'Let us sleep on it,' Juste replied, 'and to-morrow morning we will exchange ideas.'

"The next morning we took a turn in the Luxembourg garden.

"We had had time to reflect on the occurrence of the night before, and we were equally surprised by Marcas's lack of shrewdness in the petty affairs of life, whereas he had no difficulty in solving the most puzzling problems of practical or theoretical politics. But such exalted natures are all likely to stumble over grains of sand, to miss the most promising opportunities for lack of a thousand francs. That is the history of Napoléon, who did not start for India because he had no boots.

" 'What have you thought of?' Juste asked me.

" 'Well, I have thought of a way of obtaining credit for a complete outfit.'

" 'From whom?'

" 'From Humann.'

" 'How?'

"'Humann, my dear fellow, never goes to his customers, his customers go to him, so that he doesn't know whether I am rich or poor; he simply knows that I am fashionable and that the clothes he makes look well on me. I am going to tell him that an uncle from the provinces has dropped in on me, whose indifference in the matter of dress is most prejudicial to me in the best society, where I am looking for a wife.—He would not be Humann if he sent his bill within three months.'

"The Doctor thought that that would be an excellent idea in a farce, but that it was execrable in real life, and he doubted my success. But, I give you my word, Humann fitted Marcas out, and, like the artist that he is, he dressed him as a statesman should be dressed.

"Juste offered Marcas two hundred francs in gold, lent by the Mont-de-Piété on two watches purchased on credit. For my part, I had said nothing of six shirts, of everything that was necessary in the way of linen, which cost me nothing more than the pleasure of begging them from a linen-draper's forewoman with whom I had foregathered during the carnival. Marcas accepted everything without thanking us more than he ought. He simply inquired how we had come into possession of such wealth, and we made him laugh for the last time. We watched Marcas as merchants who have exhausted all their credit and all their resources in fitting out a vessel might watch it as it set sail."

At that point Charles paused; he seemed oppressed by his memories.

"Well," we cried, "what happened?"

"I will tell you in two words, for this is not a novel, but a history. We saw no more of Marcas. The ministry lasted three months, it died after the session. Marcas returned to us without a sou, exhausted by hard work. He had sounded the crater of power; he returned to the surface with the beginning of a nervous fever upon him. The disease made rapid progress and we nursed him. At the outset Juste brought the physician-in-chief of the hospital that he had entered as an intern. I then occupied our chamber all alone, and I was the most attentive of nurses; but nursing and science were of no avail. In January, 1838, Marcas himself felt that he had only a few days to live. The statesman whose mind he had been for six months did not come to see him, did not even send to inquire for him. Marcas expressed the utmost contempt for the government; he seemed to us to entertain doubts concerning the ultimate destiny of France, and those doubts had caused his illness. He believed that he had detected treachery at the heart of the government; not tangible, palpable treachery, manifested by deeds; but treachery due to a system, to the subordination of national interests to selfishness. His belief in the deterioration of the country was sufficient to aggravate his malady. I was a witness to the propositions made to him by one of the leading exponents of the opposite system which

he had fought. His detestation of the men he had tried to serve was so fierce that he would joyfully have consented to join the coalition that was being formed among the ambitious men who had one idea, if no other—that of shaking off the yoke of the court. But Marcas answered the emissary in the words of the Hôtel de Ville: 'It is too late!'

"Marcas did not leave enough to pay for his burial. Juste and I had much difficulty in sparing him the disgrace of the paupers' van, and we two alone followed the hearse containing the body of Z. Marcas, which was thrown into the common grave in the cemetery of Mont-Parnasse."

We all gazed sadly at one another as we listened to this tale, the last of those Charles Rabourdin told us on the eve of the day when he set sail on a brig, at Havre, for the Malaysian Islands, for we knew more than one Marcas, more than one victim of political devotion rewarded by treachery or neglect.

Aux Jardies, May, 1840.

THE OTHER SIDE OF CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY

FIRST EPISODE

MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE

MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE

*

On a beautiful evening in the month of September, 1836, a man of about thirty years of age stood leaning against the parapet of that quay from which, looking upstream, one can see the Seine from the Jardin des Plantes to Nôtre-Dame, and, looking downstream, the whole perspective of the river as far as the Louvre. There are not two such points of view in the whole capital of ideas. It is as if one were standing at the stern of that gigantic vessel. There one muses upon the history of Paris from the Romans to the Franks, from the Normans to the Burgundians, the Middle Ages, the Valois, Henri IV. and Louis XIV., Napoléon and Louis-Philippe. Standing there, you see some remains or some monuments that recall all of those dynasties and monarchs to our minds. Saint-Geneviève from its cupola keeps watch over the Latin quarter. Behind you rises the magnificent apse of the cathedral. The Hôtel de Ville speaks to you of all the revolutions of Paris and the Hôtel-Dieu of all its sufferings. When you have caught a glimpse of the splendors of the Louvre, by taking two steps you can see the remains of that squalid mass of buildings

situated between Quai de la Tournelle and the Hôtel-Dieu, which the sheriffs of to-day are at this moment busily occupied in demolishing.

In 1835 that wonderful picture contained one other instructive detail: between the Parisian leaning against the parapet and the cathedral, the Terrain—such was the ancient name of that desert place—was still strewn with the ruins of the archbishopric. When from that point one gazes upon so many inspiring objects, when the mind embraces at a glance the past and the present of the city of Paris, it seems as if religion had taken up its quarters there in order to put forth its hands over the afflictions of both banks, from Faubourg Saint-Antoine to Faubourg Saint-Marceau. Let us hope that so many sublimely harmonious elements will be fitly complemented by the construction of an episcopal palace in the Gothic style, which will take the place of the characterless hovels between the Terrain, Rue d'Arcole, the cathedral and Quai de la Cité.

That point, the heart of ancient Paris, is the most solitary, the most melancholy spot in the whole city. The waters of the Seine plash noisily against the piers, the cathedral casts its shadow there at sunset. One can understand how a man afflicted with some mental malady may be moved to serious thoughts in such a place.

Attracted perhaps by a secret accord between the thoughts that were in his mind at the moment and those to which the sight of such widely differing

scenes gave birth, the idler remained with his hands on the parapet, given over to a twofold contemplation: Paris and himself! The shadows lengthened, lights twinkled in the distance, and still he did not move, absorbed as he was by the current of one of those fits of musing pregnant with future events, which the past renders solemn.

At that moment he heard two persons coming toward him, whose voices he had noticed when they were upon the stone bridge leading from the island of La Cité to Quai de la Tournelle. The two persons in question evidently believed themselves to be alone, and were talking somewhat louder than they would have done in frequented places or if they had been aware of the presence of a stranger. As heard from the bridge, the voices indicated a discussion, which, to judge from some words that reached the ears of the involuntary witness of the scene, related to a loan of money. As they approached the man leaning against the parapet, one of them, who was dressed like a workingman, left the other, with a gesture of despair. The other turned, recalled the workingman and said to him:

"You haven't a sou to cross the bridge again. Here," he added, giving him a piece of money; "and remember, my friend, that it is God himself who speaks to us when worthy thoughts come to our minds!"

This last sentence made our dreamer start. The man who spoke thus did not suspect that he was, to use a vulgar expression, killing two birds with one

stone, that he was addressing his remarks to two unfortunates: a son of toil in despair and a mind without a compass; a victim of what Panurge's sheep* call progress, and a victim of what France calls equality. The words, simple enough in themselves, acquired importance from the accent of the man who uttered them and whose voice possessed a sort of fascination. Do not calm, gentle voices harmonize with the effects produced on us by gazing at ultramarine.

By his costume the Parisian recognized a priest, and by the last rays of the twilight he saw a white, imposing, but wasted face. The sight of a priest coming out of the beautiful cathedral of St. Stephen at Vienna, to carry extreme unction to a dying man, decided the famous tragic author Werner to become a Catholic. It was almost the same with the Parisian when he saw the man who had unwittingly given him consolation; he descried on the threatening horizon of his future a long luminous streak in which the azure blue of heaven shone resplendent, and he followed that light as the shepherds in the Gospel followed the voice that called to them: "Christ is born!" The man of kindly speech walked along the cathedral wall, and bent his steps by chance,—which, by the way, is sometimes logical,—toward the street from which our dreamer

* *Les moutons de Panurge.*—Rabelais tells us that Panurge, to be revenged on Dindenault, bought a sheep of him and then drove it overboard, whereupon all Dindenault's other sheep jumped over after it and the drover was ruined: hence the phrase is used for *imitators*. It is commonly used in the locution, *sauter comme les moutons de Panurge*—to jump like Panurge's sheep.

came and to which he was returning, led thither by the errors of his life.

The dreamer's name was Godefroid. As the story progresses, the reader will understand the reasons that lead us to use only the baptismal names of the characters. Let us see why Godefroid, who lived in the Chaussée-d'Antin quarter, happened to be in the neighborhood of Nôtre-Dame at such an hour.

The son of a retail tradesman who had acquired a moderate fortune by dint of economy, he became the sole ambition of his father and mother, who dreamed of seeing him a notary in Paris. With that end in view he was placed, at the age of seven, in the institution of Abbé Liautard, among the children of many distinguished families, who, under the reign of the Emperor, through attachment to the religion, which was somewhat slighted in the public secondary schools, had selected that establishment for the education of their sons. Social inequalities were not thought of among schoolmates; but in 1821, when his studies were finished and he was given a position in a notary's office, Godefroid was not slow to appreciate the distance that separated him from those with whom he had hitherto lived on familiar terms.

Being compelled to follow the course of study prescribed for his degree, he found himself an indistinguishable part of a multitude of sons of the bourgeoisie, who, without fortune or hereditary distinctions, had to rely wholly upon their personal

qualities or their persistent work. The hopes that his father and mother, who had then retired from business, based upon him, stimulated his self-esteem without making him proud. His parents lived simply, in the Dutch fashion, spending no more than the fourth of their twelve thousand francs' income; their savings, as well as half of their capital, were intended for the purchase of an office for their son. Being subjected to the laws of that domestic economy, Godefroid found his present position so at variance with his parents' dreams and his own, that he was conscious of a feeling of discouragement. In weak natures discouragement becomes envy. Whereas some others, in whom necessity, force of will, the habit of reflection took the place of talent, marched straight and resolutely onward in the path marked out for ambitious bourgeois, Godefroid turned aside from it in disgust, determined to shine, and turned his face toward all the brilliantly illuminated spots, which burned his eyes. He tried to succeed, but all his efforts ended in establishing his powerlessness. When he detected at last a lack of equilibrium between his desires and his fortune, he conceived a bitter hatred of all social supremacy, became a liberal and tried to attain celebrity by means of a book; but he learned at his own expense to look upon talent with the same eye as upon nobility. Having tried the notarial office, the bar and literature successively, without success, he determined to be a magistrate.

At that moment his father died. His mother,

who was content in her old age with two thousand francs a year, turned over almost the whole of his father's fortune to him. The possessor, at twenty-five, of an income of ten thousand francs, he deemed himself rich, and so he was in comparison with his past. Up to that time his life had been composed of acts in which his own will had no part, of unsatisfied desires; and in order to go forward with his century, to do something, to play a part, he attempted to make his way into some sort of society with the aid of his fortune. First of all he fell in with journalism, which always opens its arms to the first capital it sees. To be proprietor of a newspaper is to become a personage: you speculate in intelligence, you share its pleasures without sharing its labors. Nothing is more tempting to inferior minds than to rise to eminence thus upon another's talent. Paris has seen two or three parvenus of that sort, whose success is a disgrace both to the age we live in and to those who have lent them their shoulders to stand upon.

In that sphere, Godefroid was outdone by the vulgar Machiavelianism of some and the prodigality of others, by the wealth of ambitious capitalists or by the wit of editors; then too he was drawn into the various forms of dissipation to which literary or political life and the methods of criticism in vogue in the wings are likely to lead, and into the distractions that busily occupied minds find necessary. He fell into bad company; but he learned that he had an unimposing figure, that one of his shoulders

was perceptibly higher than the other, and that the deformity was not redeemed either by the bitterness or kindliness of his wit. Bad taste is the salary that artists draw upon when they tell the truth.

Short of stature, badly built, devoid of wit and of sustained purpose, it seemed a hopeless case for a young man at a time when the combination of the loftiest mental qualities counts little for success in any career, without good luck or the tenacity which is equivalent to good luck.

The revolution of 1830 poured balm upon Godefroid's wounds; he had the courage of hope, which is not inferior to the courage of despair; he obtained, like so many obscure journalists, his own appointment to an administrative office where his liberal ideas, being at variance with the exigencies of the new powers, made of him a rebellious subject. Being anointed with liberalism, he was unable, like several men of superior parts, to make up his mind. To obey ministers meant in his eyes to change his opinions. Moreover the government seemed to him to disregard the laws of its origin. Godefroid declared himself on the side of *movement* when it was a question of *resistance*, and he returned to Paris almost poor, but faithful to the doctrines of the opposition.

Alarmed by the excesses of the press, even more alarmed by the plots of the republican party, he sought in retirement the only life suited to a person whose faculties were incomplete, who lacked force to stand up amid the rough turmoil of political life,

whose sufferings and struggling attracted no attention, who was exhausted by his failures, who had no friends because friendship implies striking qualities, either good or bad, and whose sensibilities were rather dreamy than profound. Was it not the only possible course for a young man whom pleasure had already deceived more than once and who was already aged by contact with a society as prone to excite others as it was itself easily excited?

His mother, who died in the quiet village of Auteuil, sent for her son before her death, for the twofold purpose of having him at her side and of putting him in the way to find the peaceful, simple happiness which is adapted to satisfy such minds as his. She had at last judged Godefroid rightly, when she found him at twenty-eight years of age with his fortune reduced to four thousand francs a year, his aspirations crushed, his supposed capacity vanished, his energy gone, his ambition humbled and his hatred of everyone who made his way by legitimate means aggravated by all his failures. She tried to marry Godefroid to the only daughter of a retired tradesman, a young woman who might serve as nurse to her son's diseased mind; but the father had the calculating spirit that does not abandon an old tradesman in driving matrimonial bargains, and after a year of neighborly attentions, Godefroid was not accepted. In the first place, in the eyes of those aspiring bourgeois, the suitor was certain to be deeply tainted with immorality as a result of his previous career; secondly, during that

year he had encroached still farther upon his capital, partly to dazzle the parents, partly to please their daughter. This very pardonable vanity on his part decided the refusal of the family, in which dissipation was held in horror, as soon as they learned that Godefroid had lost a hundred and fifty thousand francs of capital in six years.

The blow penetrated the deeper into that heart, already so sorely bruised, because the young woman was not beautiful. But Godefroid, assisted by the information he received from his mother, had discovered that she possessed a thoughtful mind and the very great advantage of a vigorous intellect; he had become accustomed to her face, he had studied her features, he loved her voice, her manners, her expression. Having risked the last stake of his life on that attachment, he experienced the bitterest of disappointments. His mother died, and he, whose necessities had followed the constant progress of luxurious habits, found himself with no more than five thousand francs a year, and with the certainty that he should never be able to make up any loss whatever, because he knew himself to be incapable of the energy implied in the formidable phrase: *to make one's fortune!*

Impatient, disappointed weakness does not consent to efface itself all at once. So it was that, during his mourning, Godefroid sought favorable chances in Paris: he dined at tables-d'hôte, he formed rash intimacies with strangers, he courted society and found naught but opportunities to spend

money. As he walked along the boulevards, his mental suffering was so great that the sight of a mother accompanied by a marriageable daughter caused him a sensation as painful as that which he experienced at the sight of a young man riding to the Bois, of a parvenu in his elegant equipage, or a decorated government clerk. His consciousness of his own impotence told him that he could not aspire to the most honorable of subordinate positions, much less to the most agreeable of destinies; and he had sufficient heart to be wounded by it, sufficient wit to compose mental lamentations overflowing with gall and bitterness.

Unable to contend against fate, having a consciousness of superior faculties, but lacking the will power to set them at work, feeling that he was incomplete, that he had not the strength to undertake anything great or the power to overcome the tastes he had retained from his former life, his education or his reckless habits, he was consumed by three diseases, any one of which was enough to make a young man devoid of religious faith disgusted with life. So Godefroid's face had taken on the expression which we meet with so often that it has become the Parisian type: in it one could read defeated or dead ambitions, mental suffering, hatred lulled to sleep in the indolence of a life sufficiently engrossed by the daily, external spectacle of Paris; a lack of appetite that seeks stimulants, lamentation without talent, the grimace of strength, the venom of prior mistakes, which manifests itself in a tendency

to smile at all raillery, to spit upon everyone who succeeds, to speak slightingly of the most essential powers, to rejoice at their embarrassment, and to hold aloof from all social forms. That Parisian disease is to the active, permanent conspiracy of energetic men what the sapwood is to the sap of the tree: it preserves it, supports it and conceals it.

Disgusted with himself, Godefroid determined one morning, upon meeting one of his comrades, who had been the tortoise of the fable as he had been the hare, to give some meaning to his life. In the course of one of those conversations which naturally follow a meeting between two old college friends, in the sunlight, on Boulevard des Italiens, he was amazed to find that he, although endowed, in appearance at least, with less talent and less resources than himself, had succeeded by following out in the morning the ideas he had conceived the day before. The sick man thereupon determined to copy that simple plan of action.

"Social life is like the soil," his schoolmate had said to him, "it yields its fruits in proportion to our efforts."

Godefroid had already run in debt. As a first punishment, as a first task, he condemned himself to live in retirement, paying his debts out of his income. For a man accustomed to spend six thousand francs when he had only five, it was no small undertaking to keep his expenditures down to two thousand. Every morning he read *Les Petites Affiches*, hoping to find in its columns some place of

refuge where his expenses would be fixed, where he could enjoy the solitude essential for a man who wishes to reflect, to search his conscience, to determine his proper calling. The manners that obtained in the middle-class boarding houses of the Latin quarter offended his sense of delicacy, the private hospitals seemed to him unhealthy places, and he was in the habit of relapsing into the fatal irresolution characteristic of people who have no will, when the following advertisement caught his eye:

"Small apartment at seventy francs per month, suitable for a clergyman. A tenant of quiet habits is desired; good board will be provided and the apartment furnished at moderate expense if satisfactory arrangements can be made.

"Apply to Monsieur Millet, grocer, Rue Chanoinesse, near Nôtre-Dame, who will furnish all necessary information."

Seduced by the kindliness concealed beneath that wording and by the bourgeois perfume that exhaled from it, Godefroid had called upon the grocer about four o'clock, and had learned from him that Madame de la Chanterie was dining at that moment and that she received no visitors during her repast. The lady could be seen in the evening after seven o'clock or in the morning between ten o'clock and noon. While he was speaking, Monsieur Millet examined Godefroid and caused him to undergo, as the magistrates say, a first instalment of interrogation. "Was monsieur a bachelor? Madame desired a tenant of regular habits; the door was locked at eleven o'clock at the latest."

"Monsieur seems to me to be of about the age to suit Madame de la Chanterie," he said in conclusion.

"How old do you take me to be?" queried Godefroid.

"Something like forty," replied the grocer.

That artless reply cast Godefroid into the depths of misanthropy and melancholy; he dined on Quai de la Tournelle and returned to gaze at Nôtre-Dame just as the flames of the setting sun streamed athwart the innumerable buttresses of the apse. The quay was in shadow while the towers were still aglow with light, and the contrast made a deep impression upon Godefroid, whose mind was torn by all the bitter thoughts that the grocer's ingenuousness had revived.

Thus the young man was wavering between the counsels of despair and the moving voice of the religious harmonies with which the cathedral bell filled the air, when amid the shadows and the silence he heard the remark made by the priest. Although, like most of the young men of his time, he was far from religious, his sensibilities were touched, and he returned to Rue Chanoinesse whither he had already determined not to go.

The priest and Godefroid were equally surprised when they walked together along Rue Massillon, which lies opposite the small northern doorway of the cathedral, and turned together into Rue Chanoinesse at about the point where that street ends and Rue des Marmousets begins, near Rue de la Colombe. When Godefroid halted under the arched

gateway of the house where Madame de la Chanterie lived, the priest turned toward him, scrutinizing him by the light of a street lantern, which will doubtless be one of the last to disappear in the heart of old Paris.

"Have you come to see Madame de la Chanterie, monsieur?" the priest inquired.

"Yes," replied Godefroid. "The words that I have just heard you say to that mechanic were sufficient proof to me that this house must be a healthy place for the mind, if you live here."

"So you were a witness of my defeat?" said the priest, as he raised the knocker; "for I did not succeed."

"I should say that the mechanic was the one who did not succeed, for he was asking you for money with great earnestness."

"Alas!" replied the priest, "one of the greatest disadvantages of revolutions in France is that each one of them is a new premium offered to the ambition of the lower classes. To better his condition, to make a fortune, which is looked upon to-day as the only social guaranty, that same mechanic has been drawn into monstrous schemes which, if they should not succeed, are likely to require the speculator to settle with human justice. That is what an obliging spirit sometimes leads to."

The concierge opened a heavy gate and the priest said to Godefroid:

"It may be that monsieur has come to look at the small suite?"

"Yes, monsieur."

They thereupon crossed a courtyard of considerable size, at whose farther end arose the black mass of a tall house flanked by a square tower higher than the roof and of great antiquity. Everyone who knows the history of Paris is aware that the ground in front of and around the cathedral has been so raised that there is no trace of the twelve steps which formerly led to it. To-day the base of the pillars of the porch is on a level with the street. Thus the original ground floor of the house in question must correspond with the present cellar. A flight of two or three steps led to the door of the tower, in which there was a venerable spiral staircase winding about an axis carved to represent a vine. That style, reminiscent of the staircases built by King Louis XII. at the Château of Blois, dates back to the fourteenth century. Godefroid, whose eye was struck by a thousand indications of antiquity, could not refrain from saying to the priest, with a smile:

"Yonder tower wasn't built yesterday!"

"It is said to have resisted the onslaught of the Normans, and to have formed a part of one of the first palaces of the kings of Paris; but, according to the traditions, it seems more certain that it was the residence of the famous Canon Fulbert, the uncle of Heloïse."

As he spoke, the priest opened the door of the apartment which seemed from the street to be the ground floor, but which, on the second courtyard—

for there was a small inner courtyard—as well as on the first, was on the second floor.

In the first room a servant sat working by the light of a small lamp; on her head was a linen cap with no other ornament than goffered frills; she stuck one of her needles in her hair and held her knitting in her hand as she rose to open the door of a lighted salon looking on the inner courtyard. The woman's costume recalled that of the gray sisters.

"I bring you a lodger, madame," said the priest, ushering Godefroid into the salon, where he saw three persons sitting in easy-chairs around Madame de la Chanterie.

The three persons rose and the mistress of the house did likewise; then, when the priest had moved a chair forward for Godefroid, when the future lodger had taken his seat, at a wave of the hand from Madame de la Chanterie, accompanied by the words: "Be seated, monsieur," the Parisian fancied himself at an immense distance from Paris, in Lower Bretagne or in the heart of Canada.

Silence may be said to have degrees. Perhaps Godefroid, already impressed by the silence of Rues Massillon and Chanoinesse, through which two carriages do not pass in a month, and by the silence of the courtyard and the tower, fancied himself at the very heart of silence, so to speak, in that salon surrounded by so many old streets, old courtyards and old walls.

That part of the island known as the Cloister has retained the characteristics common to all cloisters;

it seems damp and cold, and the most profound monastic silence reigns there in the busiest hours of the day. It is to be noticed, furthermore, that all that portion of the old Cité which is crowded between the walls of Nôtre-Dame and the river is to the north of the cathedral and in its shadow. The easterly winds rush through with nothing to break their force, and the fogs of the Seine are detained there, as it were, by the black walls of the old metropolitan church. And so no one will be surprised at Godefroid's feeling when, in that venerable structure, he entered the presence of four persons as silent and solemn as their surroundings.

He did not look about, being intensely curious concerning Madame de la Chanterie, whose name had already aroused his interest. That lady was evidently a personage of another age, not to say of another world. She had a sweet face, the tones of the complexion being at once soft and cold, an aquiline nose, a double chin, brown eyes and a noble brow: the whole framed by curls of silvery hair. Her dress could be called by no other name than the old-fashioned one of *fourreau*, it fitted so closely, after the style of the eighteenth century. The material, which was a light-brown silk with numerous narrow green stripes, seemed to be of the same period. The waist, which was of one piece with the skirt, was concealed beneath a paduasoy mantle with a border of black lace, fastened over the breast with a miniature pin. Her feet, encased in black velvet slippers, rested on a

THE BROTHERHOOD OF CONSOLATION

"I bring to you a lodger, madame," said the priest, ushering Godefroid into the salon, where he saw three persons sitting in easy-chairs around Madame de la Chanterie.

The three persons rose—

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small cushion. Like her servant, Madame de la Chanterie was knitting stockings, and had a needle stuck in her curls under her lace cap.

"Have you seen Monsieur Millet?" she asked Godefroid in the nasal voice peculiar to the dowagers of Faubourg Saint-Germain, as if to give him an opening, when she saw that he was somewhat abashed.

"Yes, madame."

"I am afraid that the apartment will hardly suit you," she continued, as she observed the fashionable cut and the newness of her would-be lodger's attire.

Godefroid had patent leather boots, yellow gloves, handsome shirt-studs, and a dainty watch-chain passed through one of the buttonholes of his black silk waistcoat with blue flowers. Madame de la Chanterie took a small silver whistle from one of her pockets and whistled. The servant entered.

"Manon, my girl, show monsieur the rooms.—Will you accompany monsieur, my dear vicar?" she added, addressing the priest.—"If the lodgings should happen to suit you," she said, rising again and turning to Godefroid, "we will discuss terms."

Godefroid bowed and left the room. He heard the jingling of the keys which Manon took from a drawer, and he saw her light the candle in a great yellow copper candlestick. She went before, without speaking a word. When Godefroid found himself on the stairs, ascending to the upper floors, he doubted whether he was really alive, he seemed to

be in a waking dream, he had before him the fanciful world of the novels he had read in his hours of leisure. Any Parisian who had, as he had, recently left the modern quarters of the city, the luxurious houses and appointments, the brilliantly illuminated restaurants and theatres, the bustle and animation of the heart of Paris, would have shared his opinion. The candlestick held by the servant dimly lighted the old winding staircases, where the spiders had spun their webs, now covered with dust. Manon wore a petticoat with broad pleats, made of coarse sackcloth; her waist was cut square behind as well as in front and her dress was all made in one piece. When they reached the third floor, which was supposed to be the second, Manon stopped, turned the key in an old-fashioned lock and opened a door roughly painted in imitation of mahogany.

"This is it," she said, entering the room first.

Had a miser, a painter who died in want, a cynic to whom the world was of no account, or a monk who lived apart from the world, occupied those apartments? One might well have asked himself that quadruple question upon inhaling the odor of destitution, upon observing the grease-spots on the smoke-begrimed papers, the blackened ceilings, the small window-panes incrusted with dirt, the stained bricks of the floor, and the wainscoting coated with a sort of sticky varnish. A cold, damp blast blew down the fireplaces of carved and painted stone, over which were mirrors set between piers of the

seventeenth century. The apartment was on two sides of a square, like the house itself, surrounding the inner courtyard, which Godefroid could not see on account of the darkness.

"Who last lived here?" Godefroid asked the priest.

"An ex-councilor of Parliament, one Monsieur de Boisfrelon, a great-uncle of Madame. The old man, who had been in his dotage ever since the Revolution, died in 1832 at the age of ninety-six, and Madame could not make up her mind to put a stranger in here at once; but she cannot afford to be without the rent any longer."

"Oh! Madame will have the apartment put in order and furnished to suit monsieur," interposed Manon.

"That will depend on the arrangements you may make with her," said the priest. "You will find a fine parlor, a large bedroom and a cabinet, and the two small rooms at right angles on the courtyard will make an excellent place to work. My apartment below and the one above are arranged in the same way."

"Yes," said Manon, "Monsieur Alain's apartment is just like yours, but he has a view of the tower."

"I think that I ought to see the rooms and the house by daylight," said Godefroid timidly.

"Very likely," said Manon.

The priest and Godefroid went downstairs, leaving the servant to lock the doors, after which she overtook them and lighted them. When they

returned to the salon, Godefroid, having overcome his timidity, was able to examine the persons and things there assembled.

The windows of the salon were hung with curtains of old red silk with lambrequins, caught back by silk cords. The red tiles were visible around the edges of a rug of antique tapestry too small to cover the floor. The wainscoting was painted gray. The ceiling, separated into two parts by a huge beam, one end of which was set in the chimney, seemed like a tardy concession to fashion. The easy-chairs, of wood painted white, were upholstered in tapestry. A cheap clock, flanked by two candlesticks of gilded copper, adorned the mantelpiece. At Madame de la Chanterie's side was an old-fashioned claw-footed table, upon which were her skeins of yarn in a wicker basket. The scene was lighted by a hydrostatic lamp.

The three men, who were sitting in their chairs as rigid and motionless and silent as Buddhist priests, had evidently, as well as Madame de la Chanterie, ceased their conversation when they heard the stranger returning. All three of them had cold, discreet faces, in harmony with the salon, the house and the quarter. Madame de la Chanterie admitted the reasonableness of Godefroid's conclusions and said that she would do nothing further until she should learn the intentions of her prospective tenant —or, to speak more accurately, her boarder. If the tenant could become reconciled to the customs of the

house, he might become her boarder, but those customs were so different from those of Paris! Life on Rue Chanoinesse was like life in the provinces: one must be at home at ten o'clock, as a general rule; they detested noise; neither women nor children were wanted, so that the deep-rooted customs of the house might not be disturbed in any way. Only a man of the church could adjust himself to that order of things. Madame de la Chanterie especially desired someone who lived modestly and was not exacting; she could furnish the apartment only with what was strictly necessary. Monsieur Alain—she indicated one of the gentlemen present—was satisfied, and she would treat her new lodger as she treated the old ones.

"I do not imagine," said the priest, "that monsieur is very much inclined to enter our convent."

"Indeed! why not?" said Monsieur Alain; "we are very comfortable here, and we get along very well together."

"Madame," said Godefroid rising, "I shall have the honor to see you again to-morrow."

Although he was a young man, the four old men and Madame de la Chanterie rose, and the vicar escorted him as far as the stoop. The whistle blew. At that signal the concierge appeared, armed with a lantern, escorted Godefroid to the street, and closed and locked the huge yellow gate, as heavy as the door of a prison and decorated with arabesques of iron-work dating back to a period difficult to determine.

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When Godefroid had taken his seat in a cab and was being driven toward the warm, living, brilliantly lighted regions of Paris, all that he had just seen seemed to him like a dream, and the thoughts he had had as he walked along Boulevard des Italiens, were already a dim memory.

"Shall I find those people there to-morrow?" he wondered.

The next day, when he rose, surrounded by the splendors of modern luxury and the appliances of comfort as the English understand it, Godefroid recalled all the details of his visit to the Cloister of Nôtre-Dame, and realized the meaning of the things he had seen. The three unknown men, whose dress, whose demeanor and whose silence were still vividly present to his mind, must be boarders, as well as the priest. Madame de la Chanterie's solemn manner seemed to him to be due to the secret dignity with which she endured great misfortunes. But, despite the explanations he offered himself, Godefroid could not avoid the feeling that there was something mysterious in those discreet faces. He selected at a glance such of his furniture as could be retained, such as was indispensable to him; but when he transported it mentally to the shabby lodgings on Rue Chanoinesse, he began to laugh at the contrast it would offer to its surroundings, and

he determined to sell everything, reduce his indebtedness with the proceeds and let Madame de la Chanterie furnish the rooms for him. What he must have was an entirely new life, and any objects likely to remind him of his former position would be unpleasant to look at. In his longing for the transformation,—for his was one of the characters that go a long distance in a new direction at the first stride, instead of feeling their way step by step as others do,—he was seized by an idea as he was breakfasting: he determined to turn his fortune into cash, pay his debts, and invest the balance of his capital with the banking house with which his father had done business.

That house was the house of Mongenod et Cie., established in Paris in 1816 or 1817, whose reputation for honorable dealing had never been assailed amid the commercial depravity with which certain Paris houses were more or less tainted. Thus, despite their enormous wealth, the houses of Nucingen, Du Tillet, Keller Frères and Palma et Cie. suffered a loss of reputation which, to be sure, was not talked about, or, if you please, was talked about only in whispers. Shocking methods had produced such satisfactory results, political success and allegiance to the dynasty covered a base extraction so completely, that no one, in 1834, paid any heed to the mud that surrounded the roots of those majestic trees, the props of the State. Nevertheless, there was not a single one of those bankers to whom a word in praise of the house of Mongenod

was not a deadly wound. The house of Mongenod, following the example of the great English bankers, made no outward show; profound silence reigned in their counting-rooms; they were content to carry on the banking business with a discretion, good judgment and uprightness that enabled them to extend their operations with security from one end of the world to the other.

The present head of the firm, Frédéric Mongenod, is the Vicomte de Fontaine's brother-in-law. Thus that numerous family is connected through Baron de Fontaine with Monsieur Grossetête, the receiver-general, brother of the Grossetêtes of Grossetête et Cie. of Limoges; with the Vandenesses and with Planat de Baudry, another receiver-general. That relationship, after procuring the late Mongenod Senior great advantages in the financial operations of the Restoration, had procured for him the confidence of the first families of the old nobility, whose capital and vast savings were entrusted to his bank. Far from aspiring to the peerage, like the Kellers, the Nucingens and the Du Tillets, the Mongenods held aloof from politics and knew no more of it than it was essential for the bank to know.

The house of Mongenod had its quarters in a superb mansion, between courtyard and garden, on Rue de la Victoire, where Madame Mongenod and her two sons, the three members of the firm, lived. Madame la Vicomtesse de Fontaine had been bought out by them at the time of the elder Mongenod's death, in 1827. Frédéric Mongenod, a handsome

man of about thirty-five, cold and taciturn in manner, reserved as a Genevan and neat as an Englishman, had acquired under his father's eye all the qualities essential to his difficult profession. He had received a better education than the vast majority of bankers, his studies having covered all the subjects embraced in the polytechnic curriculum; but, like many bankers, he had a predilection, a fad outside of his business—he was very fond of mechanics and chemistry. His brother, who was ten years younger than he, occupied much the same position in his brother's office as that occupied by a head clerk in the office of a notary or a solicitor; Frédéric was training him, as he had himself been trained by his father, in all the branches of knowledge essential for the true banker, who is to money what the writer is to ideas: both of them should know everything.

Upon giving his family name, Godefroid discovered in what esteem his father was held, for he was taken directly through the offices to Mongenod's private room. As the doors to that room were of glass, Godefroid, notwithstanding his attempts not to listen, heard the conversation that was in progress within.

"Madame, your account shows sixteen hundred thousand francs to your credit and the same to your debit," Mongenod the younger was saying; "I do not know what my brother's intentions are, and only he can say whether an advance of a hundred thousand francs is possible. You have been

imprudent. Nobody ought to risk sixteen hundred thousand francs in business."

"Too loud, Louis," said a woman's voice; "your brother has told you always to speak in undertones. There may be somebody in the small salon."

At that moment Frédéric Mongenod opened the door between his apartments and the private office; he spied Godefroid and walked across the office, bowing respectfully to the person with whom his brother was talking.

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" he said to Godefroid, allowing him to enter the office first.

As soon as Godefroid gave his name, Frédéric offered him a seat, and while he was opening his desk, Louis Mongenod and a lady, who was no other than Madame de la Chanterie, rose and walked toward Frédéric. All three stood in a window-recess and talked in undertones with Madame Mongenod, to whom all business matters were submitted. For thirty years past she had given her husband, and her sons after him, proofs of a capacity for business, which made her an active partner, for she was authorized to sign the firm name. Godefroid saw boxes labelled: *Affaires de la Chanterie,* and numbered from 1 to 7. When the conference was brought to an end by the banker saying to his brother: "Very well, go down to the cashier," Madame de la Chanterie turned, saw Godefroid, restrained a gesture of surprise, and questioned Mongenod in an undertone; he replied briefly in the same tone.

Madame de la Chanterie wore small black woolen shoes, gray silk stockings, and the same dress she had worn the night before; her figure was enveloped in the Venetian *baute,* a sort of cloak just coming into fashion once more. On her head was a green silk hood, of the style called *à la bonne femme*, lined with white silk. Her face was surrounded by billows of lace. She was very erect and her bearing, if it did not indicate high birth, indicated familiarity with the ways of aristocratic life. Except for her excessive affability, she might have seemed haughty. At all events she was imposing.

"It was not so much chance as a dispensation of Providence that brought us both here this morning, monsieur," she said to Godefroid, "for I had almost decided to refuse a lodger whose habits seemed to me likely to be at variance with those of my household; but Monsieur Mongenod has given me certain information concerning your family, which—"

"Why, madame—monsieur," said Godefroid, addressing Madame de la Chanterie and the banker at the same time, "I have no family now, and I have come here to ask my father's former banker for advice as to the employment of my little fortune in some new way."

Godefroid speedily and in a few words told his story, and expressed his desire to change his mode of life.

"In the old days," he said, "a man in my position would have turned monk; but we have no religious orders now."

"Go to madame's house, if madame is willing to take you for a lodger," said Frédéric Mongenod, after exchanging a glance with Madame de la Chanterie, "and don't sell your government stocks, but let me have them. Give me the exact figure of your indebtedness, I will arrange periods of payment with your creditors, and you will have about a hundred and fifty francs a month for yourself. It will take two years to clear you. During those two years, you will have, where you will be, plenty of leisure to think of a career, especially among the people with whom you are to live, whose advice is sure to be good."

Louis Mongenod returned with a hundred notes of a thousand francs, which he handed to Madame de la Chanterie. Godefroid offered his future landlady his hand and escorted her to her cab.

"We shall meet again soon, monsieur," she said in a friendly tone.

"At what hour will you be at home, madame?" said Godefroid.

"In two hours."

"I have time to sell my furniture," he said, as he took leave of her.

During the short time that he had held Madame de la Chanterie's arm in his and they had walked along together, Godefroid had been unable to take his eyes from the halo that Louis Mongenod's words: "Your account foots up sixteen hundred thousand francs," had placed about the head of that woman, whose life was passed in the depths of the Cloister

of Nôtre-Dame. The thought: "She must be rich!" changed his point of view entirely.

"How old can she be?" he asked himself.

And he caught a glimpse of a possible romance in a sojourn on Rue Chanoinesse.

"She has a noble air! Does she do a banking business?" he said to himself.

In our day, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand young men in Godefroid's position would have thought of the possibility of marrying the woman.

A dealer in furniture, who was something of an upholsterer, but whose principal business was renting furnished apartments, gave Godefroid about three thousand francs for all that he wanted to sell, and allowed him to retain it the few days required for putting in order the unattractive apartment on Rue Chanoinesse, whither the mentally diseased young man promptly repaired. He sent for a painter whose address Madame de la Chanterie gave him, and who agreed, for a modest sum, to whiten the ceilings, clean the woodwork, paint all the wainscoting to imitate Spa wood, and stain the floor, all within the week. Godefroid took the measure of the rooms and ordered the same carpet for them all, a green carpet of the cheapest sort. He desired uniformity and the utmost simplicity in his cell. Madame de la Chanterie approved his idea. With Manon's assistance she calculated the amount of white calico necessary for curtains at the windows and for bed-curtains for a simple iron bed; then she

agreed to purchase and make them at a price so moderate that Godefroid was surprised. With the new furniture that he brought, his apartment all restored did not cost him more than six hundred francs.

"So I shall be able to carry about a thousand to Monsieur Mongenod," he said.

"We lead a Christian life here," said Madame de la Chanterie, "and that, you know, accords but ill with many superfluities, and I think that you still retain too many."

As she gave her future lodger that advice, she glanced at a diamond that sparkled in the ring through which Godefroid's blue cravat was passed.

"I only mention it," she continued, "because I see that you intend to break off the life of dissipation which you bewailed to Monsieur Mongenod."

Godefroid gazed at Madame de la Chanterie, enjoying the melody of her bell-like voice; he scrutinized that absolutely white face, worthy of one of the grave, cold Dutchwomen whom the brushes of the Flemish school have reproduced so well, and in whose faces wrinkles are impossible.

"White and plump!" he said to himself as he took his leave; "but her hair is very white—"

Like all weak natures, Godefroid had easily made up his mind to begin a new life, thinking that everything would run smoothly, and he was in great haste to go to Rue Chanoinesse; nevertheless he had an attack of prudence, of suspicion, if you choose. Two days before he removed to his new

quarters, he went to Monsieur Mongenod to obtain some information as to the household he was about to enter. During the few moments that he had passed in his future lodgings to look over the changes that had been made there, he had noticed several persons going in and out, whose appearance and manner, although not precisely mysterious, gave him reason to think that some of the members of the household were engaged in secret professions or occupations. At that time there was much talk of attempts on the part of the elder branch of the Bourbons to regain the throne, and Godefroid believed that some conspiracy was on foot. When he found himself in the banker's private office and exposed to his penetrating glance as he asked the question, he was ashamed of himself, and he saw a sardonic smile upon Frédéric Mongenod's lips.

"Madame la Baronne de la Chanterie," he replied, "is one of the most obscure persons in Paris, but she is one of the most honorable. Have you any reasons for asking me for information concerning her?"

Godefroid took refuge in commonplaces: he was going to live for a long while with strangers, and he felt that he ought to know with whom he was forming relations, etc. But the banker's smile became more and more satirical, and Godefroid, whose embarrassment increased in the same degree, had the shame of the performance without deriving any benefit from it, for he dared not ask any further questions concerning Madame de la Chanterie or her lodgers.

Two days later, on a Monday evening, after dining for the last time at the Café Anglais and sitting through the first two plays at the Variétés, he arrived about ten o'clock at Rue Chanoinesse, where he was shown to his apartment by Manon.

Solitude has charms comparable to those of savage life, which no European ever quitted after he had once had a taste of it. This may seem strange at a time when everyone lives so wholly for the sake of his fellows that everyone meddles with everyone's business, and there soon will be no such thing as private life, since the eyes of that modern Argus, the newspaper, are progressing so rapidly in audacity and greed; nevertheless the proposition is supported by the authority of the first six centuries of Christianity, during which no hermit ever returned to society. There are few mental wounds that solitude does not cure. So it was that Godefroid, at the outset, was soothed by the tranquillity and silence of his new home, precisely as a tired traveler forgets his fatigue in the bath.

On the day following his installation as one of Madame de la Chanterie's family, he meditated deeply perforce, finding himself separated from everything, even from Paris, although he was still in the shadow of the cathedral. There, having laid aside all social vanities, he would have no other witnesses of his acts than his own conscience and Madame de la Chanterie's lodgers. He had left the broad highway of society and entered upon an unfamiliar path; but whither would that path lead

him? to what occupation should he turn his attention?

He had been absorbed in such reflections for two hours, when Manon, the only servant in the establishment, knocked at his door and informed him that the second breakfast was served, and that they were waiting for him. The clock was striking twelve. The new boarder went down at once, impelled by a longing to form an opinion of the five persons with whom his life was to be passed thenceforth. As he entered the salon, he saw all the inmates of the house standing about, dressed in the same clothes that they wore on the evening that he came to see the rooms.

"Did you sleep well?" Madame de la Chanterie asked him.

"I did not wake until ten," replied Godefroid, bowing to the four boarders, all of whom solemnly returned his salutation.

"We waited for you," said the old gentleman named Alain, with a smile.

"Manon mentioned a second breakfast," said Godefroid; "it seems that I have already broken a rule, unwittingly. At what time do you rise?"

"We do not rise quite so early as the monks used to do in the old days," replied Madame de la Chanterie graciously, "but we rise with the workingman —at six o'clock in winter, at half-past three in summer. Our hour for retiring also corresponds with that of the sun. We are always asleep at nine o'clock in winter and at eleven in summer. After

saying our prayers, we all take a little milk, which comes from our farm, except Monsieur l'Abbé de Vèze, who celebrates early mass, at six o'clock in summer and seven in winter, at Nôtre-Dame—a service which these gentlemen, as well as your humble servant, attend every day."

Madame de la Chanterie finished this explanation at the table, at which her five guests had taken their seats.

The dining-room, painted gray throughout, with wainscoting of a pattern in the style of the age of Louis XIV., adjoined the species of anteroom in which Manon sat, and seemed to be parallel with Madame de la Chanterie's bedroom, which doubtless communicated with the salon. The room had no other ornament than an old-fashioned clock. The furniture consisted of six chairs, whose backs, oval in shape, were upholstered in tapestry evidently executed by Madame de la Chanterie's own hand; two mahogany sideboards and a mahogany table, on which Manon laid no cloth for breakfast. That repast, monastic in its frugality, consisted of a small turbot with a white sauce, potatoes, a salad, and four plates of fruit—peaches, grapes, strawberries and fresh almonds; in the way of *hors-d'œuvre*, there were honey in the comb, as it is served in Switzerland, butter and radishes, cucumbers and sardines. It was served in the familiar ware decorated with blue-bells and green leaves, which was doubtless a great rarity under Louis XVI., but which the constantly increasing

demands of life at the present day have made very common.

"We are fasting," said Monsieur Alain. "As we go to mass every morning, you may imagine that we comply blindly with all the requirements of the Church, even the most severe."

"And you will begin by following our example," said Madame de la Chanterie, with a stealthy glance at Godefroid, whom she had placed by her side.

Of the four boarders, Godefroid already knew the names of Abbé de Vèze and Monsieur Alain; but he had still to learn the names of the other two. They said nothing, but ate their breakfast with the attention that men of the cloth seem to bestow upon the most trivial details of their repasts.

"Does this fine fruit also come from your farm, madame?" inquired Godefroid.

"Yes, monsieur," she replied. "We have our little model farm just as the government has; it is our country house, three leagues from here, on the road to Italy, near Villeneuve-Saint-Georges."

"It is a piece of property that belongs to us all and is to go to the last survivor," said Goodman Alain.

"Oh! it's no great affair," added Madame de la Chanterie, who seemed to fear that Godefroid might take these remarks as a bait.

"There are," said one of the two whom Godefroid did not know, "thirty acres of tillage land, six acres of meadow and a vineyard of four acres, with our house in the centre and the farmhouse a short distance away."

"Why, such a piece of property must be worth more than a hundred thousand francs, is it not?" observed Godefroid.

"Oh! we get nothing from it but our provisions," the same person replied. He was a tall, thin man of serious mien. At first sight he seemed to have served in the army; his white hair said plainly enough that he had passed his sixtieth year, and his face bore signs of bitter suffering endured with the aid of religion.

The other unknown, whose appearance suggested the teacher of rhetoric and the man of business at the same time, was of medium height, stout and active none the less: his face betrayed the jovial character peculiar to the notaries and solicitors of Paris.

The costumes of the four men presented the phenomenon of perfect neatness due to the pride of the person who took care of them. The same hand, Manon's, could be detected in the smallest details. Their coats were ten years old perhaps, and they were kept in as perfect a state of preservation as a curé's coats, by the occult power of the servant and by constant use. The four men wore the livery, so to speak, of a system of existence, they were all possessed by the same thought, their glances said the same words, their faces breathed gentle resignation, provoking tranquillity.

"Do I presume too far, madame," said Godefroid, "in asking the names of these gentlemen? I am ready to tell them the story of my life; may I not

learn so much of theirs as the proprieties permit me to know?"

"Monsieur's name is Monsieur Nicolas," answered Madame de la Chanterie, indicating the tall, thin man; "he is a colonel of gendarmerie, retired with the rank of brigadier-general.—Monsieur," she added, indicating the short, stout man, "is an ex-counselor of the royal court at Paris, who withdrew from the magistracy in 1830; his name is Monsieur Joseph. Although you have been here only since yesterday, I will tell you that in the world Monsieur Nicolas bore the name of Marquis de Montauran and Monsieur Joseph that of Lecamus, Baron de Tresnes; but to us, as to everybody else, those names no longer exist; these gentlemen are without heirs; they anticipate the oblivion that awaits their families, and they are simply Messieurs Nicolas and Joseph, as you will be Monsieur Godefroid."

When he heard those names, one so famous in the annals of royalism by reason of the catastrophe which put an end to the uprising of the Chouans in the early years of the Consulate, the other so revered in the annals of the old Parliament of Paris, Godefroid started involuntarily; but as he looked at those two relics of the two greatest things in the history of the crumbled monarchy—the nobility and the gown—he could detect no turn of expression, no change of feature that implied the existence of a worldly thought. The two men no longer remembered, or did not choose to remember,

what they had been. It was Godefroid's first lesson.

"Each of your names, messieurs, is a whole history in itself," he said respectfully.

"The history of our time," replied Monsieur Joseph, "of a mass of ruins."

"You are in good company," said Monsieur Alain, with a smile.

The last-named gentleman may be described in two words: he was the petty bourgeois of Paris, an honest bourgeois with the face of a calf, set off by white hair, but made insipid by an eternal smile.

As for the priest, Abbé de Vèze, his cloth told the whole story. The priest who does his duty is recognized at the first glance you exchange with him.

The thing that most impressed Godefroid at the beginning was the profound respect manifested by the four boarders for Madame de la Chanterie: all of them—even the priest, notwithstanding the sacred character that his functions bestowed upon him—bore themselves as if they were in a queen's presence. Godefroid noticed the abstemiousness of all his table-companions. Each of them ate for the sole purpose of maintaining life. Madame de la Chanterie took a single peach and half a bunch of grapes, as did each of her former guests, but she bade her new boarder not to imitate their moderation, by offering him each plate in turn.

Godefroid's curiosity was aroused to the highest pitch by this beginning. When they returned to

the salon after breakfast, he was left alone, while Madame de la Chanterie held a little private council with the four friends in a window-recess. This conference, which was carried on without any animation, lasted nearly half an hour. They talked in undertones, exchanging words which each one seemed to have thought out beforehand. From time to time Messieurs Alain and Joseph turned over the leaves of a memorandum-book.

"Look over the faubourg," said Madame de la Chanterie to Monsieur Nicolas, as he was leaving the room.

Those were the first words Godefroid was able to catch.

"And you, the Saint-Marceau quarter," she continued, addressing Monsieur Joseph.—"Beat up the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and try to find there what we need," she added, looking at Abbé de Vèze, who at once took his leave.—"And do you, my dear Alain," she said, smiling upon the last of the four, "go over the whole field.—There, to-day's business is attended to," she said, returning to Godefroid.

She sat down in her armchair, took from a small work-table in front of her some of the linen that had already been cut out, and commenced to sew as briskly as if she were engaged on task-work.

Godefroid, lost in conjecture and believing that a royalist conspiracy was on foot, took his landlady's remark for an opening, and began to study her, taking a seat beside her. He was struck by the remarkable dexterity with which she worked, for

everything about her betrayed the great lady. She worked as rapidly as a seamstress, for there are certain indications by which anybody can distinguish the work of the professional from that of an amateur.

"You work as if you knew the trade!" said Godefroid.

"Alas!" she replied without raising her head, "I used to work at it from necessity."

Two great tears started from the old lady's eyes and fell from her cheeks upon the linen she held in her hand.

"Pardon me, madame!" cried Godefroid.

Madame de la Chanterie glanced at her new lodger and saw upon his face such an expression of regret that she made him a friendly sign. Having wiped her eyes, she at once recovered the characteristic tranquillity of her face, which was placid rather than cold.

"Monsieur Godefroid—for you are already aware that here you will be called by your baptismal name and no other—in this house you are amid the débris of a great tempest. We were all bruised and wounded in our hearts, in our family affections or in our fortunes by that hurricane of forty years' duration, which has overthrown the royal power and the religion, and scattered abroad the elements of which the old France was made up. Remarks that seem harmless wound us all, and that is the reason of the silence that prevails here. We rarely speak of ourselves; we have forgotten ourselves and have found a way to substitute another life for our own. And it was because it seemed to me, judging from what

you said at Mongenod's, that there was some similarity between your situation and ours, that I persuaded my four friends to receive you among us; indeed, we needed to find one monk more for our convent. But what are you going to do? One doesn't court solitude without some moral purpose."

"Hearing you speak thus, madame, I should be very happy if you would become the arbiter of my destiny."

"You speak like a man of the world," she replied, "and you are trying to flatter me, a woman of sixty!—my dear child," she continued, "understand that you are among people who firmly believe in God, all of whom have felt His hand, and who have given themselves to Him almost as completely as the Trappists. Have you noticed the deep-rooted feeling of security of the true priest when he has given himself to the Lord, when he listens to the voice and forces himself to be a docile instrument in the fingers of Providence? He has no more vanity, nor self-esteem, nor any of those things that inflict continual wounds upon worldly people; his peace of mind resembles that of the fatalist, his resignation enables him to endure anything. The true priest, an Abbé de Vèze, is like a child with its mother, for the Church, my dear monsieur, is a loving mother. But a man may become a priest without a shaven crown, all priests are not in holy orders. To devote one's self to doing good is to imitate the good priest, it is to obey God! I am not preaching to you, I am not seeking to convert you, but to explain our life to you."

"Teach me, madame," said Godefroid, completely subjugated, "so that I may not infringe any article of your code!"

"You would have too great a task; you will learn by degrees. But above all things, never mention your misfortunes here, for they are the merest child's play compared with the terrible catastrophes with which God has stricken those with whom your lot is now cast."

While she was speaking, Madame de la Chanterie continued to ply her needle with despairing regularity; but at that point she raised her head and looked at Godefroid: she found him fascinated by the penetrating sweetness of her voice, which, let it be said, possessed a sort of apostolic unction. The young patient gazed with admiration at the truly extraordinary phenomenon presented by his companion, whose face fairly glowed. A rosy flush had overspread her waxen cheeks, her eyes sparkled, the youthful enthusiasm of the soul gave life to her slight wrinkles which seemed to add charm to her expression, and everything about her solicited affection. At that moment, Godefroid realized the depth of the abyss that lay between that woman and any commonplace sentiment; he saw that she had attained an inaccessible mountain-top to which religion had guided her, and he was still too worldly not to be stung to the quick, not to long to go down into the abyss, to climb the steep peak on the other side where Madame de la Chanterie had taken her stand, and to stand beside her there. Devoting his

energies the while to a thorough study of the woman, he told her of the disappointments of his life and all that he had not been able to tell in Mongenod's office, where he had confined himself to a statement of his present position.

"Poor child!"

That maternal exclamation from Madame de la Chanterie's lips, fell at intervals like soothing balm upon the young man's heart.

"What can I substitute for so many unfulfilled hopes, for so much unrequited affection?" he asked at last, glancing at his landlady, who had become pensive.

"I came here," he continued, "to reflect and to decide what course to take. I have lost my mother, take her place—"

"Will you give me the obedience of a son?" she said.

"Yes, if you give me the affection that wins obedience."

"Very well, we will try."

Godefroid put out his hand to take one of his landlady's, which she, divining his purpose, gave him and he put it respectfully to his lips. Madame de la Chanterie had a wonderfully beautiful hand, without wrinkles, neither plump nor thin, so white that a young woman might have envied it, and of a shape to be copied by a sculptor. Godefroid gazed admiringly at her hands, finding them in harmony with the fascination of her voice and the celestial limpidity of her glance.

"Stay here!" she said, rising and returning to her own room.

Godefroid experienced the keenest emotion, and did not know to what order of ideas to attribute her latest manœuvre; his perplexity was not of long duration, for she returned at once with a book in her hand.

"Here, my child," she said, "are the prescriptions of an eminent physician for the soul. When the ordinary course of life fails to afford us the happiness we expected from it, we must seek happiness in the higher life, and this is the key to a new world. Read a chapter in this book night and morning; but bestow all your attention on it as you read, study every word as if it were written in a foreign tongue. A month hence you will be a different man. For twenty years I have read a chapter every day, and my three friends, Messieurs Nicolas, Joseph and Alain, would no more think of omitting that duty than of omitting to go to bed at night and rise in the morning; follow their example for love of God, for love of me," she said with divine serenity, with impressive confidence.

Godefroid turned the book over and read on the back, in gilt letters: *Imitation of Jesus Christ.* The old lady's ingenuousness, her child-like innocence, her certainty that she was doing the right thing, abashed the ex-dandy. Madame de la Chanterie's manner and her joy were precisely like those of a woman offering a hundred thousand francs to a merchant on the verge of bankruptcy.

"I have used it twenty-six years," she said. "God grant that the book may carry the germs of contagion! Go and buy me another, for this is the time when certain people come who must not be seen."

Godefroid bowed to Madame de la Chanterie and went up to his room, where he threw the book on a table, crying:

"Dear, good woman!"

Like all books that are constantly read, the book opened at a certain place. Godefroid sat down as if to put his ideas in order, for he had been more deeply moved that morning than during the most agitated months of his whole life, and his curiosity especially had never been so intense. Letting his eyes wander at random, as one generally does whose mind is deep in meditation, he glanced mechanically at the two pages at which the book was open and read this heading:

Chapter XII

Of the Royal Way of the Holy Cross

He took up the book and this passage of that beautiful chapter caught his eye as if written in letters of fire:

"He went before, bearing His cross, and died for thee on the cross; that thou mightest also bear thy cross and desire to die on the cross with Him.

"Go where thou wilt, seek whatsoever thou wilt, thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy cross.

"Dispose and order all things according to thy will and judgment; yet thou shalt ever find, that of necessity thou must suffer somewhat, either willingly or against thy will, and so thou shalt ever find the cross.

"Sometimes thou shalt be forsaken of God, sometimes thou shalt be troubled by thy neighbors; and, what is more, oftentimes thou shalt be wearisome to thyself.

"Neither canst thou be delivered or eased by any remedy or comfort; but so long as it pleaseth God, thou must bear it.

"For God will have thee learn to suffer tribulation without comfort; and that thou subject thyself wholly to Him, and by tribulation become more humble."

"What a book!" said Godefroid to himself, turning over the leaves of that chapter.

And he fell upon these words:

"When thou shalt come to this estate, that tribulation shall seem sweet, and thou shalt relish it for Christ's sake; then think it to be well with thee, for thou hast found a paradise upon earth."

Vexed by such simplicity, the true characteristic of strength, and furious at being beaten by a book, he closed it; but he found this counsel printed in gilt letters on the green morocco cover:

SEEK ONLY WHAT IS EVERLASTING

"Have they found it here?" he asked himself.

*

He went out in search of a fine copy of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, reflecting that Madame de la Chanterie would want to read a chapter that evening; he went down stairs and into the street. He stood for some moments near the gate, uncertain in which direction to go, wondering at what book-shop he had better purchase the book, and, as he stood there, he heard the noise of the massive porte-cochère closing.

Two men came from the Hôtel de la Chanterie—if the reader has carefully observed the characteristics of that venerable building, he will have recognized the distinguishing marks of the old hôtels, properly so-called. Manon, when she called Godefroid that morning, asked him how he had passed his first night at the Hôtel de la Chanterie, evidently in joke.—Godefroid followed without any idea of spying upon the two men, who took him for an ordinary passer-by and talked loud enough for him to overhear their conversation, the streets being deserted.

The two men returned through Rue Massillon, skirted the walls of Nôtre-Dame and crossed the Square.

"Well, you see, old man, it's easy enough to catch their sous.—We must agree with them, that's all!"

"But we are in debt."

"To whom?"

"To that woman."

"I would like right well to see that old carcass sue me, I'd—"

"You would—you would pay her."

"You are right, for by paying her, I would get more out of her later than I did to-day."

"Wouldn't it be better to follow their advice and succeed in getting a good start?"

"Bah!"

"For she said they would find somebody to advance the funds."

"You would have to quit the life too, you know—"

"I am sick of the life, it isn't like being a man, to be forever in one's cups."

"Very good; but didn't the abbé let Père Marin go the other day? He refused him everything."

"Pshaw! Père Marin wanted to go into schemes that only succeed with millionaires."

At that moment the two men, whose general appearance denoted shop-foremen, suddenly retraced their steps to cross Pont de l'Hôtel-Dieu on their way to the Place Maubert quarter; Godefroid stepped aside, but when they saw how closely he was following them, they exchanged a suspicious glance and their faces expressed regret at having spoken.

Godefroid was the more interested in their conversation, because it reminded him of the episode of Abbé de Vèze and the mechanic on the day of his first visit to Rue Chanoinesse.

"What can be going on at Madame de la Chanterie's?" he asked himself once more.

Meditating upon that question, he walked as far as a bookshop on Rue Saint-Jacques and returned with a sumptuously bound copy of the finest edition published of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ.* As he walked slowly homeward, in order to arrive exactly at the dinner hour, he reviewed his sensations during that morning, and he was conscious of a remarkable mental rejuvenation. He was animated by intense curiosity, but his curiosity paled nevertheless in the bright light of an inexplicable longing: he felt drawn toward Madame de la Chanterie, he had a fierce desire to attach himself to her, to sacrifice himself for her, to please her, to earn words of praise from her; in a word, he was a victim of Platonic love, he felt that she possessed unspeakable grandeur of mind, and he determined to probe her mind to the bottom. He was impatient to learn the secrets of the existence of those pure Catholics. In short, the majesty of religion was so closely allied to all that is most majestic in French womanhood, in that little circle of faithful souls, that he resolved to leave no stone unturned to procure his own admission to it. These sentiments might have sprung up very quickly even in the heart of a busy Parisian; but Godefroid was, as we have seen, in the position of a shipwrecked sailor who clings to the slenderest plank, believing it to be solid, and his mind was well ploughed, ready to receive any sort of seed.

He found the four friends in the salon and he presented the book to Madame de la Chanterie, saying:

"I did not wish you to be without it to-night."

"God grant," she replied, glancing at the superb volume, "that this may be your last attack of extravagance!"

As he noticed that the clothing of the four men was reduced, even in the smallest details, to what was absolutely essential for cleanliness and utility, and found that the same system was rigorously applied in every part of the house, Godefroid realized the full scope of that rebuke, so gracefully expressed.

"Madame," he said, "the people you bestowed your favor on this morning are monsters; I unwittingly overheard what they said when they left the house, and it was marked by the blackest ingratitude."

"They were the two locksmiths from Rue Mouffetard," said Madame de la Chanterie to Monsieur Nicolas, "that is your affair."

"The fish escapes more than once before he's caught," observed Monsieur Alain with a laugh.

Madame de la Chanterie's absolute indifference upon learning of the immediate ingratitude of men to whom she had undoubtedly given money, surprised Godefroid, who became pensive.

The dinner was enlivened by Monsieur Alain and the former counselor; but the old soldier was grave and cold and melancholy; his face bore the ineradicable

stamp of bitter chagrin, of a never-ending grief. Madame de la Chanterie bestowed her attentions upon all alike. Godefroid felt that he was being narrowly watched by his fellow-boarders, whose circumspection equaled their piety; his vanity led him to imitate their reserve, and he measured his words very carefully.

This first day was much more animated than those which followed. Godefroid, finding himself excluded from all the serious conferences, had no choice, during the few hours in the morning and evening when he was alone in his room, but to open the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, and he ended by studying it as one studies a book, when one owns but the one and is imprisoned. Under such circumstances, it is the same with the book as with a woman when one is alone with her: just as you must either detest or adore the woman, so you become permeated with the author's spirit or else you do not read ten lines.

Now, it is impossible not to be impressed by the *Imitation*, which is to doctrine what action is to thought. Catholicism vibrates through it, lives and moves in it and engages in a hand-to-hand struggle with human life. The book is a sure friend. It speaks to all the passions, to all difficulties, even worldly ones; it resolves all objections, it is more eloquent than all the preachers, for its voice is yours, it speaks in your heart, and you understand it through your soul. It is, in a word, the Gospel translated, adapted to all seasons, made appropriate to all situations. It is astonishing that the Church

never canonized Gerson, for the Holy Spirit evidently guided his pen.

So far as Godefroid was concerned, the Hôtel de la Chanterie contained a woman as well as the book; and he became more and more attached to that woman every day; he discovered in her flowers buried under the snow of many winters, he caught glimpses of the delights of that sanctified friendship which religion permits, which the angels smile upon —the same friendship which united those five persons and against which nothing evil could prevail. There is one sentiment more exalted than all others, a love of soul for soul, which resembles the rare flowers that bloom upon the highest mountain tops and of which one or two specimens are revealed to mankind from century to century; a love by which lovers often are united and which explains many faithful attachments that are inexplicable by ordinary human laws. An attachment without misunderstandings, without clouds, without vanity, without conflict, without contrasts even, the moral natures are so smoothly blended therein. Godefroid had a premonition of the raptures of that boundless, infinite sentiment, born of Catholic charity. At times he could not believe in the reality of the spectacle before his eyes, and he sought an explanation of the sublime friendship of the five, being amazed to find true Catholics, Christians of the early days of the Church, in the Paris of 1835.

A week after he became a member of the household, Godefroid witnessed such a concourse of

people, he overheard fragments of conversation concerning subjects of such gravity, that he realized that the life of those five persons must be one of prodigious activity. He noticed that no one of them slept more than six hours at the most. All of them had already done one day's work, so to speak, before the second breakfast. Strangers brought and carried away sums of money, sometimes of considerable amount. The clerk from Mongenod's counting-room was a frequent visitor, and he always came early in the morning, so that his duties would not be neglected on account of those visits, which were a departure from the regular customs of the banking-house.

One evening, Monsieur Mongenod himself came and Godefroid noticed in his manner toward Monsieur Alain a suggestion of filial familiarity mingled with the respect he manifested for him as well as for the other three of Madame de la Chanterie's lodgers.

That evening the banker asked Godefroid only the most commonplace questions: if he were comfortable there, if he intended to remain, etc., while urging him to persevere in his resolution.

"I lack only one thing to be happy," said Godefroid.

"What is that?" the banker asked.

"An occupation."

"An occupation!" cried Abbé de Vèze. "So you have changed your mind, for you came to our cloister in search of rest."

"Rest, without the prayer that gave life to the monasteries, without the meditation that peopled the desert places, becomes a disease," observed Monsieur Joseph sententiously.

"Learn book-keeping," said Monsieur Mongenod smiling, "in that way you can become very useful to my friends in a few months."

"Oh! with the greatest pleasure," cried Godefroid.

The next day was Sunday, and Madame de la Chanterie called upon her new lodger to give her his arm to go to high mass.

"It is the only violence I propose to do you," she said. "Many times during this last week I have longed to speak to you about your salvation; but I do not think that the time has come. Your time would be fully occupied if you shared our beliefs, for then you could share our work."

At mass Godefroid noticed the fervent devotion of Messieurs Nicolas, Joseph and Alain; but, as he had had an opportunity during the few days he had known them to form an accurate idea of the superior intellect, the perspicacity, the extended knowledge and the great mental powers of those gentlemen, he thought that, if they humbled themselves so, the Catholic religion must have secrets which had escaped him.

"After all," he said to himself, "it is the religion of the Bossuets, the Pascals, the Racines, Saint-Louis, Louis XIV., the Raphaels, the Michael-Angelos, the Ximenes, the Bayards, the Du Guesclins, and

I, poor insignificant creature that I am, could not venture to compare myself with those great minds, those statesmen, those poets, those illustrious captains."

If no valuable information were to be derived from these trivial details, it would be imprudent to dwell upon them now, but they are essential to the interest of this narrative in which the public of to-day will find it difficult to believe, and which begins with an almost absurd incident: the empire acquired by a woman of sixty over a young man who is thoroughly disillusioned.

"You did not pray," said Madame de la Chanterie to Godefroid at the door of Nôtre-Dame; "not for anyone, not even for the repose of your mother's soul!"

Godefroid blushed and made no reply.

"Do me the favor," said Madame de la Chanterie, "to go up to your room and not come down for an hour. If you love me," she added, "you will reflect upon the first chapter in the third book of the *Imitation*, the chapter entitled *Of Inward Consolation.*"

Godefroid bowed coldly and went upstairs.

"The devil take them!" he exclaimed, in real indignation. "What do they want of me here? what sort of business is going on?—Bah! all women, even the most pious, use the same wiles; and even if Madame," he said, calling his landlady by the name her lodgers gave her, "has no grudge against me, it is clear that some scheme is brewing against me."

Possessed by that thought, he tried to look from his window into the salon, but the arrangement of the house made it impossible. He went down one floor, then hurried back to his room; for it occurred to him that, in accordance with the rigid principles of the other inmates of the house, an act of espionage would result in his being turned out at once. To lose the esteem of those five persons seemed to him quite as serious a matter as to disgrace himself publicly. He waited about three-quarters of an hour and determined to surprise Madame de la Chanterie by shortening the time she had mentioned. It occurred to him to justify himself by a falsehood, by saying that his watch was out of order, and he set it forward twenty minutes. Then he went down without the slightest noise. He reached the door of the salon and opened it abruptly.

He saw a man of some note, still young, a poet whom he had often met in society, Victor de Vernisset, kneeling at Madame de la Chanterie's feet and kissing the hem of her dress. If the sky had fallen to pieces, as if it were made of glass, as the ancients believed, Godefroid would have been less surprised than by that spectacle. He conceived the most horrible ideas, and a reaction even more horrible ensued when, as he was about to give utterance to the first satirical remark that came to his lips, he saw Monsieur Alain in a corner counting thousand-franc notes.

In an instant Vernisset was on his feet and the worthy Alain stood as if transfixed. Meanwhile

Madame de la Chanterie darted at Godefroid a glance that turned him to stone, for her new guest's twofold change of expression had not escaped her.

"Monsieur is one of us," she said to the young poet, pointing to Godefroid.

"You are very lucky, my dear fellow," said Vernisset, "you are saved!—But, madame," he added, turning to Madame de la Chanterie, "even if all Paris had seen me I should have been overjoyed, for I can never pay my debt to you!—I am yours forever! I belong to you absolutely. Give me whatever commands you choose, I will obey! My gratitude will be without bounds. I owe you my life, it is yours."

"Well, well, young man," said Goodman Alain, "be prudent hereafter; but work, and above all things, do not attack religion in your works.—In a word, remember your debt!"

As he spoke, he handed him an envelope stuffed with the banknotes he had been counting. Victor de Vernisset's eyes were wet with tears; he respectfully kissed Madame de la Chanterie's hand and took his leave, after exchanging a handshake with Monsieur Alain and Godefroid.

"You have disobeyed Madame," said the goodman solemnly, with a sad expression on his face that Godefroid had never seen there before; "that is a capital offense; another of the same sort and we part. That will be hard for you, after we had judged you worthy of our confidence."

"My dear Alain," said Madame de la Chanterie,

"pray oblige me by saying no more about this piece of folly. We must not ask too much of a new arrival, who has had no great misfortunes, who has no religion, whose only vocation is extreme curiosity, and who does not as yet believe in us."

"Forgive me, madame," rejoined Godefroid; "I propose from this moment to be worthy of you, I submit to whatever tests you may deem necessary before admitting me to the secret of your occupations, and if Monsieur l'Abbé de Vèze will undertake to enlighten me, I will place my mind and my reason in his keeping."

These words made Madame de la Chanterie so happy that a slight flush rose to her cheeks; she grasped Godefroid's hand, pressed it warmly and said with singular emotion:

"It is well!"

That evening after dinner one of the vicars-general of the diocese of Paris called, as did two canons, two ex-mayors of Paris and a lady prominent in one of the charitable associations. There was no card-playing; the general conversation was gay without being trivial.

A visitor who caused Godefroid much surprise was the Comtesse de Cinq-Cygne, one of the queens of the aristocracy, whose salon was inaccessible to bourgeois and parvenus. The presence of that great lady in Madame de la Chanterie's salon was extraordinary enough in itself, but the way in which the two women met and treated each other was something inexplicable to Godefroid, for it

spoke of an intimate acquaintance and constant intercourse which added immensely to Madame de la Chanterie's prestige. Madame de Cinq-Cygne was affable and gracious to her friend's four friends and showed marked respect for Monsieur Nicolas. It will be seen that social vanity still influenced Godefroid, who, although hitherto undecided, determined to comply, with or without conviction, with everything that Madame de la Chanterie or her friends required of him, in order to induce them to admit him to membership in their order, or to obtain a knowledge of their secrets, promising himself that he would make up his mind as to his own course then, and not until then.

The next day he went to the book-keeper to whom Madame de la Chanterie recommended him, agreed with him as to the hours when they should work together, and in that way arranged for the employment of all his time, for Abbé de Vèze catechized him in the morning, he passed two hours every day with the book-keeper, and worked between breakfast and dinner at the imaginary accounts which his master gave him to keep.

Several days passed thus, during which Godefroid learned to feel the charm of a life in which every hour has its own duty. The recurrence of known tasks at stated hours, and perfect regularity explain many contented lives and prove how deeply the founders of the religious orders had meditated upon human nature. Godefroid, who had made up his mind to listen attentively to Abbé de Vèze,

already had some apprehension concerning the future life, and was beginning to feel that he was ignorant of the seriousness of religious questions. Lastly, Madame de la Chanterie, with whom he stayed about an hour after the second breakfast, allowed him to discover, from day to day, fresh treasures in her; he had never imagined goodness so perfect or of such vast scope. A woman of Madame de la Chanterie's apparent age no longer has the petty foibles of the young woman; she is a friend who offers you all the delicate feminine attentions, who displays the graces, the charms which nature inspires in woman for man's benefit, and who no longer sells them; she is either detestable or perfect, for all her pretensions either exist deeper than the skin or are dead, and Madame de la Chanterie was perfect. She seemed never to have been young, her glance never spoke of the past. Far from allaying Godefroid's curiosity, a more and more intimate acquaintance with her sublime character, and the discoveries of each succeeding day redoubled his desire to learn the story of the early life of that woman, who seemed to him a saint. Had she ever loved? had she been married? had she been a mother? Nothing about her indicated the old maid, she displayed the graceful breeding of a woman of high birth, and her robust health, the extraordinary phenomenon of her conversation led one to feel that she lived a sort of divine existence and knew nothing of ordinary life. All the associates, except the jovial Alain,

had suffered; but even Monsieur Nicolas seemed to award the palm of martyrdom to Madame de la Chanterie, and yet the memory of her misfortunes was so held in check by the resignation of a devout Catholic, by her secret occupations, that she seemed to have been happy always.

"You are," Godefroid said to her one day, "your friends' life, you are the bond that unites them; you are, so to speak, the housekeeper of a great work; and as we are all mortal, I ask myself what would become of your partnership without you."

"That is what alarms them; but Providence, to whom we owe our book-keeper," she said with a smile, "will provide. Moreover, I shall be on the lookout—"

"Will your book-keeper soon be in the service of your business house?" laughed Godefroid.

"That depends on him," she replied with a smile. "Let him become truly religious, godly, let him lay aside every trace of selfishness, let him give no further thought to the wealth of our house, let him think about rising above petty social considerations by using the two wings God has given him—"

"What are they?"

"Simplicity and purity," she replied. "Your ignorance is sufficient evidence that you neglect the reading of our book," she added, laughing at the innocent subterfuge to which she had had recourse to ascertain if Godefroid were reading the *Imitation of Jesus Christ*. "At least, saturate yourself with the spirit of St. Paul's epistle concerning charity.

You will not be ours," she said with a sublime expression, "but we shall be yours, and it will be vouchsafed to you to count the vastest wealth that ever sovereign possessed; you will enjoy it as we enjoy it; and let me tell you, if you remember the *Thousand and One Nights*, the treasures of Aladdin are as nothing compared to what we possess. And so for a year past we have not known what to do, we have not been equal to the demands upon us: we felt the need of a book-keeper."

As she spoke, she studied Godefroid's face; he did not know what to think of that strange confidence, but as the scene between Madame de la Chanterie and Madame Mongenod often recurred to his mind, he wavered between doubt and faith.

"Ah! you will be very fortunate!" she said.

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Godefroid was so consumed by curiosity, that he determined on the spot to force the four friends to break their silence by questioning them concerning themselves. Now, of all Madame de la Chanterie's guests, the one toward whom Godefroid felt most strongly attracted, and who seemed likely to appeal most strongly to people of every class, was the kindly, cheerful, simple-hearted Monsieur Alain. By what road had Providence guided that artless creature to that monastery without bolts and bars, in the heart of Paris, whose inmates, although absolutely free, submitted to the guidance of regulations faithfully observed, as if they were subject to the strictest of superiors? What drama, what circumstance had led him to turn aside from his road through the world, to follow that path so painful to tread through the miseries of the capital?

One evening Godefroid determined to call upon his neighbor, with the purpose of gratifying a curiosity more keenly aroused by the apparent impossibility of any serious catastrophe in that life, than it would have been by the anticipation of listening to some terrifying episode in the career of a corsair. At the words "Come in!" spoken in reply to his gentle tap on the door, Godefroid turned the knob and found Monsieur Alain sitting by his fire reading a chapter of the *Imitation of*

Jesus Christ, before retiring, by the light of two candles, each provided with one of the movable green eye-shades that whist-players use.

The good man was dressed in drawers with feet and a dressing-gown of gray flannel, and his feet were supported on a level with the fire, by a cushion, which, as well as his slippers, Madame de la Chanterie had worked for him in small-stitch embroidery. The old man's fine head, without other covering than a crown of white hair almost like that of an old monk, stood out in bold relief against the brown background of the material with which his capacious easy-chair was covered.

Monsieur Alain gently placed his dog's-eared book on the little table with twisted legs, and with the other hand waved the young man to a second easy-chair, removing the eye-glasses from the end of his nose.

"Are you ill, that you have left your room at this time of night?" he asked Godefroid.

"My dear Monsieur Alain," Godefroid replied frankly, "I am tormented by a curiosity which a single word from you will prove to be very innocent or very presumptuous; that statement is enough to show you the spirit in which I shall ask my question."

"Oho! what is your question?" he exclaimed, looking at the young man with an almost sly expression.

"What were the circumstances that led to your living the life you are living here? For one must

be disgusted with the world, must have been deeply wounded or have wounded others, to embrace the doctrine of such utter self-abnegation."

"Why so, my child?" replied the old man, allowing one of those smiles which made his mouth one of the most affectionate that ever painter's genius dreamed of, to wander over his full red lips; "may one not be moved to profound pity by the spectacle of the misery that exists within the walls of Paris? Did Saint Vincent de Paul need the spur of remorse or wounded vanity to induce him to devote his life to deserted children?"

"That question closes my mouth the more surely, because, if ever a mortal resembled that Christian hero, you are the man," replied Godefroid.

Despite the roughness which advancing years had given to the skin of his almost yellow, wrinkled face, the old man blushed profusely; for he seemed to have invited the compliment, of which his well-known modesty made it impossible for him to have thought. Godefroid was well aware that none of Madame de la Chanterie's guests had the slightest taste for that sort of incense. Nevertheless, honest Alain in his excessive simplicity was more embarrassed by his scruples on the subject than a young girl would have been for having conceived some unworthy thought.

"Although I am still a long way behind him, morally speaking," rejoined Monsieur Alain, "I am very sure that I resemble him physically."

Godefroid essayed to speak, but he was restrained

by a gesture from the old man, whose nose really had the tuberculous appearance of the saint's nose, and whose face, which looked like an old vine-dresser's, was a perfect duplicate of the coarse, vulgar physiognomy of the founder of the Foundling Hospital.

"So far as I am concerned, you are right," he continued; "my calling for the work we are doing was determined by a paroxysm of repentance due to an adventure—"

"An adventure, you!" exclaimed Godefroid gently, forgetting the answer he had at first intended to make the old man.

"Oh! bless my soul, what I am going to tell you will seem a trifle, mere folly to you, I doubt not; but before the tribunal of conscience it was something more than that. If you persist in your desire to take part in our work, after listening to me, you will understand that the sentiments exist in proportion to the strength of mind, and that a thing that does not disturb a strong mind may very well torment the conscience of a weak-minded Christian."

It would be impossible to describe the curiosity of the neophyte after this species of preface. What crime could that excellent man, whom Madame de la Chanterie called her *Paschal Lamb*, have committed? It was as interesting as a book entitled the *Crimes of a Sheep*. Sheep may be ferocious creatures in their dealings with the grass and flowers. If we are to believe one of the mildest republicans of that epoch, the kindest of mortals would be cruel to

something. But Goodman Alain! who, like Sterne's Uncle Toby, would not crush a fly after it had stung him twenty times! that pure soul to be tortured by remorse!

This reflection represents the pause the old man made after the words "Listen to me!" meanwhile pushing his cushion toward Godefroid's feet so that he might share it with him.

"I was a little over thirty years old," he began; "it was in '98, as nearly as I remember, a time when young men were likely to have had the experience of men of sixty. One morning, a little before my breakfast hour, nine o'clock, my old housekeeper announced one of the friends whom I had retained throughout the tempests of the Revolution. So my first words were an invitation to breakfast. My friend, a young man of twenty-eight, named Mongenod, accepted the invitation, but in an embarrassed way; I had not seen him since 1793—"

"Mongenod!" cried Godefroid, "the—"

"If you want to know the end before the beginning," the old man interposed with a smile, "how am I to tell you my story?"

Godefroid made a gesture which promised absolute silence.

"When Mongenod sat down," continued Alain, "I noticed that his shoes were sadly worn. His spotted stockings had been washed so often that I had difficulty in discovering that they were made of silk. His trousers, of apricot-colored cashmere, were worn threadbare by long use, which was also

attested by a difference of shade in risky places, and his knee-buckles seemed to me to be of common iron instead of steel; the buckles on his shoes were of the same metal. His flowered white waistcoat, yellowed by wear, like his shirt, whose frills were sadly rumpled, betrayed extreme but decent destitution. Last of all, the condition of his *houppelande*—such was the name by which we used to call a single-caped frockcoat, cut like a Crispin cloak —confirmed my conviction that my friend had fallen upon evil days. The *houppelande*, which was of nut-brown cloth, exceedingly threadbare but carefully brushed, had a collar soiled with pomade or powder, and white metal buttons that were turning red. He was so shame-faced in all that frippery, that I dared not look at him. His *claque*, a sort of semi-circle of felt, which it was the fashion in those days to carry under the arm instead of wearing it on the head, must have seen several governments. Nevertheless, my friend had evidently spent a few sous at the barber's, for he was shaved. His hair was gathered up behind, fastened with a comb, powdered profusely and smelt of pomade. I saw two parallel chains on the front of his breeches, two chains of tarnished steel, but no sign of a watch in the fob. It was winter and Mongenod had no cloak; divers large drops of melted snow that had fallen from the roofs of the houses as he walked along, spotted the collar of his *houppelande*. When he removed his rabbit-skin gloves and I saw his right hand, I detected the marks of work of some sort,

and hard work too. Now, his father, who was an advocate before the *Grand Conseil*, had left him some property, five or six thousand francs a year. I realized at once that Mongenod had come to borrow of me. I had in a safe hiding-place two hundred louis d'or, an enormous sum for those days, worth I forget how many hundred thousand francs in *assignats*. Mongenod and I had studied at the same college, Des Grassins, and we had met again in the office of the same attorney, an honest man, the excellent Bordin. When a man has passed his youth and indulged in youthful escapades with a school-fellow, there is an almost sacred bond of sympathy between them; his voice and look stir certain chords in the heart that vibrate only under the influence of the memories he revives. Even when one has had just grounds for complaint against such a comrade, all the rights of friendship are not done away with; but there had never been the slightest disagreement between us. At the time of his father's death in 1787, Mongenod was richer than I; although I had never borrowed from him, I had sometimes been indebted to him for the enjoyment of pleasures which my own father's rigorous treatment made impossible to me. Had it not been for my generous school-fellow, I should not have seen the first performance of the *Mariage de Figaro*. Mongenod was then what was called a charming gallant, he had love-affairs; I used to rebuke him for his readiness to form new ties and his too accommodating spirit; his purse opened easily, he

lived handsomely, he would have served as your second when he had seen you but twice.—*Mon Dieu*, you carry me back to the days of my youth!" cried honest Alain, pausing in his narrative, and smiling happily at Godefroid.

"Do you bear me a grudge for it?" said Godefroid.

"Oh! no, and by my going into details as I do, you can see how large a place that incident fills in my life.—Mongenod, a man of excellent heart and approved courage, something of a Voltairean, was disposed to play the gentleman," continued Monsieur Alain; "his education at Des Grassins, where some scions of the nobility were among his school-fellows, and his love-affairs had given him the polished manners of men of condition, who were then called aristocrats. You can imagine now how great my surprise was when I detected in Mongenod the symptoms of destitution which degraded the fashionable young dandy of 1787 in my eyes, when they left his face to scrutinize his clothing. However, as some crafty persons designedly adopted the external appearances of poverty in those days of public misery, and as there were other sufficient reasons for disguising one's self, I awaited an explanation, but not without inviting it.

" 'Well, well, what sort of a plight is this for you to be in, my dear Mongenod?' I exclaimed, accepting a pinch of snuff which he offered me in an imitation gold snuff-box.

" 'Sad enough!' he replied. 'I have but one

friend left, and you are he. I have done all I could do to avoid coming to this, but I am here to ask you for a hundred louis. It is a large sum,' he said, noticing my astonishment; 'but if you should give me only fifty, I should be unable ever to repay you; whereas, if I fail in what I mean to undertake, I shall still have fifty louis with which to try my fortune in other directions; and I do not know what inspiration despair may give me.'

"'Have you nothing at all?' I asked.

"'I have five sous left out of my last gold piece,' he replied, choking back a tear. 'Before coming to you, I had my boots polished and visited a barber. I have what clothes I am wearing. But,' he added with an eloquent gesture, 'I owe my landlady a thousand crowns in *assignats*, and our eating-house keeper refused to trust me yesterday. So I am without resource.'

"'And what do you expect to do?' I asked, trying already to ascertain his thoughts.

"'To enlist, if you refuse—'

"'You, a soldier! You, Mongenod!'

"'I will either be killed or become General Mongenod.'

"'Very well,' I said, deeply moved, 'eat your breakfast in peace, I have a hundred louis.'

"Just there," continued the good man with a shrewd glance at Godefroid, "I thought it necessary to indulge in a money-lender's little falsehood.

"'It is all I own in the world,' I said to Mongenod; 'I was awaiting the moment when public securities

should reach the lowest possible point, before investing the money, but I will put it in your hands, and you may look upon me as your partner; I leave it to your conscience to see that it is repaid in due time. An honest man's conscience,' I added, 'is the best of guarantees.'

"Mongenod gazed earnestly at me as he listened, and seemed to be engraving my words on his heart. He put out his right hand, I placed my left hand in it, and we exchanged a warm handclasp, I deeply moved, he without trying to check two great tears that rolled down his already wasted cheeks. The sight of those two tears tore my heart. I was even more touched when, forgetting everything in the excitement of the moment, Mongenod took out a wretched, torn cotton handkerchief to wipe his eyes.

" 'Stay here!' I said to him, leaving the room to go to my hiding-place, my heart as agitated as if I had just been listening to a woman's confession that she loved me. I returned with two rolls of fifty louis each.

" 'Here, count them.'

"He refused to count them, but looked around the room in search of a writing desk, in order to give me an acknowledgment, as he said. I flatly refused to take any paper from him.

" 'If I should die,' I said, 'my heirs would annoy you. This must be between ourselves.'

"Finding me so good a friend, Mongenod laid aside the mask of chagrin and anxiety he had worn when

he came in, and became cheerful. My housekeeper served us some oysters with white wine, an omelet, kidneys *à la brochette*, the remains of a Chartres pie that my old mother had sent me, a little dessert, coffee and Curaçoa. Mongenod, who had been fasting for two days, did full justice to the repast. We sat at table until three in the afternoon, like the best friends in the world, talking over our life before the Revolution. Mongenod told me how he had lost his fortune. In the first place, the fall in the securities of the city had cut off two-thirds of his income, for his father had invested the greater part of his capital in them; then, after selling his house on Rue de Savoie, he had been obliged to take his pay in *assignats;* he had thereupon taken it into his head to publish a newspaper, *La Sentinelle*, which had forced him to flee, after an existence of six months. At that moment all his hopes rested upon the success of a comic opera entitled *Les Péruviens*. This last disclosure made me tremble. Mongenod, turned author, after running through his money with *La Sentinelle*, and living doubtless at the theatre, on terms of intimacy with Feydeau's singers, with musicians and the curious society that hides behind the drop-curtain, no longer seemed to me the same Mongenod. I was conscious of a slight thrill of anxiety. But how was I to take back my hundred louis? I could see the shape of one of the rolls in each pocket of his breeches, like the barrel of a pistol. Mongenod left me. When I found myself alone, no longer under the spell of that

poignant, cruel poverty, I began to reflect in spite of myself, I became sober.

"'Mongenod,' I thought, 'is undoubtedly sadly depraved, and he has been acting a part with me!'

"His cheerfulness when he saw me recklessly give him such an enormous sum, seemed to me then to be the joy of a stage servant laying a trap for some Géronte. I ended where I should have begun, I promised to make inquiries concerning my friend Mongenod, who had written his address for me on the back of a playing-card. A sort of delicacy prevented me from going to see him the next day; he might have scented suspicion in my promptitude. The second day various matters took up all my attention, and it was not until a fortnight had elapsed, that, having seen nothing of Mongenod, I went one morning from the Croix-Rouge, where I then lived, to Rue des Moineaux, where he lived. Mongenod lodged in a furnished house of the lowest order, the mistress of which, however, was a very excellent woman, the widow of a farmer-general who died on the scaffold; being completely ruined, she had started with a few louis upon the hazardous trade of lodging-house keeper. Since then, she has had seven houses in the Saint-Roch quarter, and has made her fortune.

"'Citizen Mongenod is not in, but there is somebody in his room,' she informed me.

"The last words aroused my curiosity. I went up to the fifth floor. A charming young woman

opened the door!—oh! a most beautiful creature—who, with a very suspicious air, stood in the doorway.

"'I am Alain, Mongenod's friend,' I said.

"The door was at once thrown open and I entered a horrible garret, which was kept wonderfully clean and neat, however, by the young woman in question. She pushed a chair in front of a fireplace filled with ashes but without fire, in a corner of which I saw a common earthen chafing-dish. It was freezing cold.

"'I am very happy, monsieur,' she said, taking my hands and pressing them warmly, 'to have an opportunity of expressing my gratitude to you, for you are our savior. Except for you, perhaps, I never should have seen Mongenod again. He would have—what?—thrown himself into the river. He was desperate when he left me to go to see you.'

"Upon looking closely at the young woman, I was amazed to see a silk handkerchief on her head, and under the handkerchief, behind the head and around the temples, a black shadow; but, by dint of looking and looking, I discovered that her head was shaved.

"'Are you ill?' I asked, when I felt sure of that extraordinary fact.

"She glanced into a wretched, dirty mirror over the fireplace and began to blush; then her eyes filled with tears.

"'Yes, monsieur,' she replied hastily; 'I had horrible pains in my head and I was forced to part

with my beautiful hair, that used to fall to my heels.'

"'Have I the honor of speaking to Madame Mongenod?' I asked.

"'Yes, monsieur,' she replied, with a truly celestial glance.

"I took leave of the poor little woman. I went down stairs with the intention of making the landlady talk, but she had gone out. I was convinced that the young woman must have sold her hair in order to buy bread. I went to a dealer in wood and sent half a load to the house, requesting the teamster and sawyers to give the little woman a receipted bill in the name of Monsieur Mongenod.—That is the end of the period of what I long called *my idiocy*," said Goodman Alain, clasping his hands and raising them a little with a repentant gesture.

Godefroid could not refrain from smiling, and his smile, as we shall see, was sadly misplaced.

"Two days later," the old man continued, "I met one of those persons who are neither friends nor enemies, but with whom we have some intercourse at long intervals—what we call an *acquaintance*—one Monsieur Barillaud, who, when *Les Péruviens* was casually mentioned, said that he was a friend of the author.

"'Do you know Citizen Mongenod?' I asked.

"In those days we were still obliged to use the familiar mode of address," he explained to Godefroid by way of parenthesis.

"The citizen looked at me," he continued, resuming his narrative, "and exclaimed:

" 'I should be very glad if I had never known him, for he has borrowed money of me several times, and manifests sufficient friendship for me to neglect to return it. He's a devil of a man; a good fellow enough, but full of illusions!—oh! he has a fiery imagination.—I do him justice, he doesn't mean to deceive; but, as he deceives himself in everything, the result is that he acts like a swindler.'

" 'How much does he owe you?'

" 'Oh! a few hundred crowns.—He's a basket with a hole in it. No one knows where his money leaks out,—perhaps he doesn't know himself.'

" 'Has he any means?'

" 'Oh yes!' said Barillaud, with a laugh. 'At this moment he is talking of buying land among the savages, in the United States.'

"I carried away that drop of vinegar which calumny had implanted in my heart and which soured all my kindly inclinations. I went to see my former employer, who acted as my adviser. As soon as I had entrusted to him the secret of my loan to Mongenod and the way in which I had acted:

" 'What,' he cried, 'do you say that one of my old clerks is acting like that! Why, you ought to have put him off until the next day and come to see me. You would have learned that I have given orders not to let Mongenod pass my door. He has already borrowed a hundred crowns of me within a

year, an enormous sum! And three days before he went to breakfast with you, he met me in the street and described his misery in such heartrending terms that I gave him two louis.'

"'If I have been duped by a clever actor, so much the worse for him, not for me,' I said. 'But what am I to do?'

"'You must at least obtain some acknowledgment from him, for a debtor, however unreliable he is, may become solvent, and then you are paid.'

"Thereupon Bordin produced from a box on his desk an envelope on which I saw the name of Mongenod; he showed me three notes for a hundred francs each.

"'The first time he comes,' he said, 'I shall make him add the interest, the two louis I gave him and whatever other sum he asks me for; then he must sign an acceptance for the whole amount, with interest from the day of the loan. Then I shall be all right and I shall have a way of enforcing payment.'

"'Very well,' I said to Bordin, 'can't you make me all right in the same way? for you are an honest man and whatever you do is done as it should be.'

"'In that way I am master of the field,' replied the ex-attorney. 'When a man does as you have done, he's at the mercy of a man who may make a fool of him. For my part, I don't propose to be made a fool of! Laugh at an ex-attorney at the Châtelet! ta-ra-ra! Every man to whom another lends a sum of money as you foolishly lent yours

to Mongenod, comes sooner or later to believe that it belongs to him. It isn't your money, it's his money, and you become his creditor, an embarrassment to him. Thereupon he tries to rid himself of you, making a bargain with his conscience; and out of every hundred men, seventy-five will do their best never to meet you again so long as they live.'

"'So you consider that only twenty-five per cent of mankind are honest?"

"'Did I say that?' he replied with a sly smile. 'That's a large percentage.'

"Two weeks later I received a letter from Bordin asking me to call upon him and get my note. I went.

"'I tried to save fifty louis for you,' he said.—I had told him of my conversation with Mongenod.—'But the birds have flown. Say good-bye to your *yellow boys!* Your canary birds have flown to a warmer climate. We have a sharp fellow to deal with. Did he not assure me that his wife and father-in-law had gone to the United States with sixty of your louis to buy land, and that he expected to join them there and make a fortune in order to return and pay his debts, of which he gave me a schedule in due form, for he requested me to find out what might become of his creditors. Here is the statement summarized,' said Bordin, showing me a paper from which he read the total: 'Seventeen thousand francs in cash! a sum with which he could buy a house worth two thousand crowns a year!'

"Having replaced the papers in the box, he handed me a note of hand for the equivalent of a

hundred louis in gold, expressed in *assignats*, with a note from Mongenod, acknowledging the receipt of a hundred louis in gold and agreeing to pay the interest.

"'I am all right now, am I?' said I to Bordin.

"'He won't deny the debt,' my former employer replied; 'but where there is nothing, the king, that is to say the Directory, loses its rights.'

"With that I left him. Believing that I had been robbed by a method which the law does not reach, I withdrew my esteem from Mongenod and resigned myself very philosophically to my fate.

"If I dwell upon these commonplace and apparently trivial details," continued the good man, looking at Godefroid, "I have my reasons for so doing; I am trying to explain to you how I was led to act as the majority of men act, at random and in defiance of the rules that even savages observe in the most trifling matters. Many people would justify themselves by throwing the blame on a prudent man like Bordin; but it seems to me to-day that my conduct was inexcusable. When it is a question of passing judgment upon one of our fellow-creatures by refusing him our esteem forever, we should rely upon ourselves alone; and again:—ought we to constitute our own hearts a tribunal before which to cite a neighbor? Where would be the law? by what measure should we mete out justice? May not the very thing that is weakness in us be strength in our neighbor? There are as many different circumstances as there are human beings, for the

same thing never happens twice in the same way. Society alone has the right of repression over its members; for I deny it the right of punishment: to repress is enough for it and it carries with it, too, sufficient cruelty.

"So, paying heed to the high-flown talk of a Parisian man of business and admiring the shrewdness of my former employer, I passed condemnation upon Mongenod," the good man continued, after giving utterance to that sublime reflection. *Les Péruviens* was announced. I expected that Mongenod would send me a ticket for the first performance. I was conscious of a feeling of superiority to him; my friend seemed to me, by reason of the loan, a sort of vassal who owed me a multitude of things over and above the interest on my money. We all act so! Not only did Mongenod not send me a ticket, but when I saw him at a distance in the dark passage-way under the Feydeau theatre—well-dressed, almost dandified—he pretended not to see me; and when he had passed me and I started to run after him, my debtor made his escape down a side passage. That incident annoyed me keenly. My irritation was not a mere passing sentiment, but it increased with time. It happened thus. A few days after this meeting I wrote Mongenod a letter in substantially these words:

"'My friend, you cannot think me indifferent to anything that may happen to you, whether it be good or ill-fortune. Are you satisfied with *Les Péruviens?* You forgot me, as you had a perfect right to do, for the first performance, which I

would have applauded so heartily! However, I trust that it will be a veritable Peru to you, for I have employment for my money and I count upon you when the note matures.

"'Your friend,

"'ALAIN.'

"After waiting a fortnight without receiving a reply, I went to Rue des Moineaux. The landlady informed me that the little woman had really gone away with her father at the time Mongenod had told Bordin of their departure. Mongenod left his garret early in the morning and did not return until late at night. Another fortnight passed and I wrote another letter in these terms:

"'My dear Mongenod, I see nothing of you, you do not answer my letters: I cannot understand your conduct; what would you think of me if I should act so to you?'

"I did not sign that letter *Your friend;* I simply wrote *Kind regards*. A month passed and I heard nothing from Mongenod. *Les Péruviens* did not achieve the great success that Mongenod expected. I attended the twentieth performance to try to get my money, and the audience was very small. Madame Scio was very beautiful though. They told me in the green room that the play was to be given several times more. I called on Mongenod seven times but did not find him, and every time I left my name with the landlady. Then I wrote to him:

"'Monsieur, if you do not wish to forfeit my esteem after forfeiting my friendship, you will treat me now as a stranger,

that is to say with courtesy, and tell if you will be prepared to pay your note at its maturity. My future movements will be guided by your reply.

"'Your servant,

"'ALAIN.'

"No reply. It was the year 1799; a year had passed, lacking two months. When the note matured I went to Bordin. Bordin took the note, had it protested and brought suit. The disasters experienced by the French armies had depreciated the funds to such an extent that an expenditure of seven francs would yield five francs a year. Thus I could have invested a hundred louis in gold to bring me in fifteen hundred francs. Every morning, as I drank my coffee and read my newspaper, I would say:

"'That infernal Mongenod! If it weren't for him I should have a thousand crowns a year!'

"Mongenod had become my *bête noire*, I grumbled at him as I walked along the street.

"'Bordin is on hand,' I said to myself, 'he will push him hard, and it will be a good thing!'

"My hatred vented itself in imprecations, I cursed the man and charged him with every vice in the calendar. Ah! Monsieur Barillaud was quite right in what he said to me. At last one morning my debtor appeared at my rooms, no more embarrassed than if he did not owe me a centime; when my eye fell upon him I felt all the shame that he should have felt. I was like a criminal caught in the act. I was very ill at ease. The 18th Brumaire had

come and gone, everything was in fine shape, the Funds were rising and Bonaparte had gone to Italy for the campaign that ended with the battle of Marengo.

"'It is unfortunate, monsieur,' I said, receiving him standing, 'that I owe your visit only to the urgency of a bailiff.'

"Mongenod took a chair and sat down.

"'I have come to tell you,' he replied, 'that I am not in a position to pay you.'

"'You made me lose an opportunity to invest my money before the First Consul's arrival, when I might have made a little fortune.'

"'I know it, Alain,' he said, 'I know it. But what is the use of suing and forcing me deeper into debt by loading me down with costs? I have heard from my wife and my father-in-law; they have bought land and have sent me a memorandum of the things they need to establish themselves: I have had to use all my ready money in making those purchases. Now I propose to sail on a Dutch vessel, from Flushing, where I have sent all my little belongings, and nobody can prevent my going. Bonaparte has won the battle of Marengo, a treaty of peace will soon be signed and I can without fear join my family, for my dear little wife was *enceinte* when she went away.'

"'So you have sacrificed me in your own interest?' I said.

"'Yes,' he replied, 'I thought that you were my friend.'

"At that moment I felt inferior to Mongenod, he seemed so sublime to me as he uttered those simple yet grand words.

" 'Did I not tell you?' he continued. 'Was I not absolutely frank with you, here, in this very room? I came to you, Alain, as to the only person who could understand me. "Fifty louis," I said to you, "would be thrown away; but a hundred I will repay you." I mentioned no time; for can I tell on what day I shall have ended my long struggle with poverty? You were my last friend. All my friends, even our old employer Bordin, despised me for the very reason that I borrowed money of them. Ah! Alain, you know nothing of the cruel sensation that tears the heart of an honest man engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with misfortune, when he goes to a friend to ask for help!—and all that follows! I trust that you may never know it: it is more horrible than the agony of death. You wrote me letters which, coming from me under similar circumstances, would have seemed very hateful to you. You expected me to do things that were not in my power. You are the only one to whom I have undertaken to justify myself. Despite the harsh measures you have taken, and although you transformed yourself from a friend to a creditor on the day when Bordin demanded of me a note for you, thus proving false to the spirit of the sublime contract we made in this room, as we grasped each other's hands and mingled our tears,—I remembered only that morning. Because of that hour I have

come to say to you: "You know nothing of misfortune, so do not rail at it!" I have not had an hour or a second to write to you and answer your letters! Perhaps you would have liked me to come and wheedle you?—You might as well ask a hare, tired out by the dogs and hunters, to stop to rest in a clearing and nibble the grass there! I have not had a bank-note to give you, not one; I have not had enough to meet the demands of those upon whom my fate depended. Being a novice in writing for the stage, I have been the victim of musicians, actors, singers and orchestra. In order to be able to go out and buy what my family needed across the ocean, I sold *Les Péruviens* to the manager, with two other plays that I had in my desk. I am starting for Holland without a sou. I shall eat nothing but bread until I reach Flushing. My journey is paid for and that is all. Except for the compassion of my landlady, who has confidence in me, I should have had to travel on foot with my wallet on my back. And so, notwithstanding your suspicions concerning me, as I should not have been able to send my wife and mother-in-law to New York except for you, my gratitude to you remains unimpaired. No, *Monsieur* Alain, I shall not forget that the hundred louis you lent me would be bringing you in fifteen hundred francs a year.'

" 'I would like to believe you, Mongenod,' I said, almost melted by the tone in which he uttered this explanation.

" 'Ah! you no longer call me *monsieur*,' he said

eagerly, looking into my face with a moved expression, 'God knows that I should leave France with less regret if I could leave behind me one man in whose eyes I am neither half a knave nor a spendthrift nor a victim of illusions. I have loved an angel in the midst of my misery. A man who loves truly, Alain, is never wholly contemptible.'

"At that I put out my hand, he took it and pressed it warmly.

" 'May Heaven protect you!' I said.

" 'We are still friends?' he asked.

" 'Yes,' I replied. 'It shall not be said that the companion of my childhood and the friend of my youth set out for America under the weight of my anger.'

"Mongenod embraced me, with tears in his eyes, and rushed to the door. When I met Bordin a few days later, I described the interview from beginning to end, and he said, with a smile:

" 'I trust that it wasn't a scene out of a comedy! He didn't ask you for anything?'

" 'No.'

" 'He came to me, too, and I was almost as weak as you; he asked me for enough to feed him on the journey. However, the one who lives will see what happens!'

"That remark of Bordin's made me fear that I had foolishly yielded to a compassionate impulse.

" 'But even he, the attorney, did as I did!' I said to myself.

"I do not think it worth while to explain to you

how I lost all my fortune, except my other hundred louis which I invested in consols at such a high premium that I had barely five hundred francs a year to live upon, when I was thirty-four years old. Through Bordin's influence I obtained a position at a salary of eight hundred francs at the Rue des Petits-Augustins branch of the Mont-de-Piété. I lived very modestly. I had lodgings on the third floor of a house on Rue des Marais—a small suite consisting of two rooms and a cabinet—for two hundred and fifty francs. I dined at a bourgeois boarding-house for forty francs a month. I did copying in the evening. Ugly as I am and poor, I had to abandon all thought of marriage—"

As poor Alain pronounced that sentence upon himself with adorable resignation, Godefroid made a gesture more eloquent than any words could have been of a similarity between their destinies, and the good man, in reply to that eloquent gesture, seemed to await some remark from his listener.

"Have you never been loved?" Godefroid asked.

"Never!" was the reply; "except by Madame, who returns the love we all feel for her, a love that I may call divine. You have had an opportunity to realize the truth of what I say; we live in her life as she lives in ours; we have only one heart between us; and although not *physical*, our pleasures are none the less keen, for we exist only through the heart. What would you have, my child?" he continued; "when women learn to appreciate moral qualities,

they have done with externals, and then they are old. I have suffered bitterly, you see!"

"Ah! I know what it means," said Godefroid.

"Under the Empire," the good man continued, looking down again, "interest on the Funds was not paid promptly, and one had to provide for intervals of non-payment. There was not a week, from 1802 to 1814, when I did not attribute my sorrows to Mongenod.

" 'Except for Mongenod,' I would say to myself, 'I might have married. Except for him I should not be obliged to live in privation.'

"But sometimes too I would say to myself:

" 'Perhaps the poor fellow is having hard luck over yonder!'

"In 1806, one day when my life seemed a heavy burden, I wrote him a long letter which I sent by way of Holland. I received no reply, and I waited three years, founding upon that reply hopes that were constantly disappointed. At last I became resigned to my life. To my five hundred francs a year and my twelve hundred at the Mont-de-Piété, —for my salary had been increased—I added five hundred for services as book-keeper to Monsieur Birotteau, a perfumer. Thus, not only was I able to live, but I laid by eight hundred francs a year. Early in 1814, I invested my savings, amounting to nine thousand francs, in the public funds at forty, and I had sixteen hundred francs assured for my old age. Thus I had fifteen hundred francs from the Mont-de-Piété, six hundred for my book-keeping,

sixteen hundred from the Funds, in all three thousand seven hundred francs. I hired an apartment on Rue de Seine and lived a little better. My place brought me in contact with many poor wretches. In twelve years I had become better acquainted than most people with the public misery. Once or twice I helped some poor devil. I felt the keenest pleasure when one or two of the ten families that were indebted to me succeeded in getting out of difficulty. It occurred to me that benevolence does not consist simply in tossing money to those who are suffering. What is commonly called charity seems to me to be very often a sort of premium placed on crime. I began to study the question. I was then fifty years old and my life was almost done.

"'What am I good for?' I asked myself. 'To whom shall I leave my fortune? When I have furnished my apartment handsomely, when I have a good cook, when my existence is reasonably well assured, how shall I employ my time?'

"Thus eleven years of revolution and fifteen years of poverty had consumed the pleasantest part of my life, had worn it out in profitless toil or employed it simply in self-preservation! At that time of life no man can take a fresh start from such an obscure destiny, fettered by need, toward a brilliant destiny; but one can always make one's self useful. I realized at last that careful oversight, with abundance of good advice, increased tenfold the value of money given, for the unfortunate need guidance most of all; when you teach them to make

the most of the work they do for others, the intelligence of the speculator is not what they need. Two or three satisfactory results that I obtained made me very proud. I had discovered both an aim and an occupation, to say nothing of the exquisite enjoyment afforded by the pleasure of playing the rôle of Providence on a small scale."

"And you are playing it to-day on a large scale, are you not?" asked Godefroid earnestly.

"Oh! you want to know everything!" said the old man; "no, no.—Would you believe it?" he continued after a pause; "the slender resources that my small fortune placed at my disposal carried my mind back frequently to Mongenod.

" 'Except for Mongenod, I should have been able to do much more,' I said. 'If a dishonest man had not cheated me out of fifteen hundred francs a year,' I often thought, 'I might save such and such a family.'

"And so, as I explained my powerlessness by an accusation, those to whom I offered no consolation but words cursed Mongenod with me. Those maledictions relieved my heart.

"One morning, in January, 1816, my housekeeper announced—whom? Mongenod! Monsieur Mongenod! And whom did I see enter my room?—the same lovely woman, then about thirty-six years old, and with her, three children; then Mongenod, younger than when he went away, for wealth and happiness spread a halo about their favorites. When I last saw him, he was thin, pale, yellow, bilious;

he returned stout and ruddy as a canon, and well dressed. He threw himself into my arms and, finding that I received him but coldly, his first words were:

"'Could I have come any sooner, my friend? The sea has been open only since 1815, and it took me eighteen months to turn my property into cash, collect what was owing to me and close up my business. I have been successful, my friend! When I received your letter, in 1806, I was starting on a Dutch vessel to bring you a small fortune with my own hands; but the alliance between Holland and the French Empire led to my being taken by the English, who sent me to Jamaica, whence I escaped by a lucky chance. On my return to New York, I found that I had been victimized by several failures; for, in my absence, poor Charlotte had not been suspicious enough of clever schemers. So I was compelled to recommence the building of my fortune. However, here we are at last. By the way in which these children look at you, you should divine that we have often spoken to them of the family benefactor!'

"'Oh! yes, monsieur,' said pretty Madame Mongenod, 'there has not been a single day that we haven't thought of you. Your share has been calculated in all our undertakings. We have all looked forward to the joy we feel at this moment in offering you your fortune, without suggesting, however, that this *tithe of the Lord* will ever pay our debt of gratitude.'

"As she spoke Madame Mongenod handed me

the magnificent casket you see yonder, in which were a hundred and fifty thousand-franc notes.

"'You have suffered terribly, I know, my poor Alain; but we divined your sufferings and we wore ourselves out trying to devise methods of sending you the money, but always without success,' said Mongenod. 'You told me that you weren't able to marry; but our oldest daughter here has been brought up in the idea of becoming your wife, and she will have five hundred thousand francs for her dowry—'

"'God forbid that I should make her unhappy!' I cried hastily, as I turned my eyes upon a girl as lovely as her mother was at her age.

"I drew her to me and kissed her on the forehead.

"'Don't be afraid, my beautiful child,' I said to her. 'A man of fifty marry a girl of seventeen—and a man as ugly as I am!—never!' I cried.

"'Monsieur,' she replied, 'my father's benefactor will never be ugly in my eyes.'

"Those words, uttered spontaneously and with perfect candor, convinced me that everything Mongenod had said was true; so I offered him my hand and we embraced again.

"'My friend,' I said to him, 'I have done you wrong, for I have often accused you, cursed you—'

"'As you should have done,' he replied, blushing; 'you suffered, and through me—'

"I took Mongenod's papers from a box and handed them to him, thus discharging his debt.

"'You must all breakfast with me,' I said to the family.

"'On condition that you come and dine with madame as soon as she is settled,' said Mongenod, 'for we arrived only yesterday. We are going to buy a house and I propose to open a banking-house in Paris with North American connections, so as to leave it to this rascal,' he said, pointing to his oldest son, who was then fifteen years old.

"We passed the rest of the day together and went to the play in the evening, for Mongenod and his family were hungry for the theatre. The next day I invested the money in the public funds, and I had about fifteen thousand francs a year in all. That income enabled me to abandon keeping books in the evening and to resign my position at the Mont-de-Piété, to the great satisfaction of the substitutes. After founding the banking-house of Mongenod et Compagnie, which made enormous profits in the first loans of the Restoration, my friend died in 1827, at the age of sixty-three. His daughter, to whom he gave later a dowry of more than a million, married the Vicomte de Fontaine. The son, whom you know, is not yet married; he lives with his mother and his young brother. We obtain from them all the money we happen to need. Frédéric, for his father gave him my name when he was born in America—Frédéric Mongenod, at thirty-seven, is one of the ablest and most upright bankers in Paris. Not long ago Madame Mongenod finally confessed to me that she sold her hair for twelve

THE RETURN OF MONGENOD

"One morning, in January, 1816, my housekeeper announced—whom? Mongenod! Monsieur Mongenod! And whom did I see enter my room?—the same lovely woman, then about thirty-six years old, and with her, three children."

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Adrien Le Sueur sc

francs, to buy bread. She gives twenty-four loads of wood every year, which I distribute among the poor, to pay for the half load I sent her long ago."

"That explains your relations with the house of Mongenod," said Godefroid, "and your fortune."

The good man looked at Godefroid, still smiling with the same mildly mischievous expression.

"Go on," continued Godefroid, understanding from Monsieur Alain's air that he had not told everything.

"That conclusion, my dear Godefroid, made a most profound impression upon me. Although the man who had suffered so keenly, although my friend forgave the injustice I had done him, I shall never forgive myself."

"Oh!" said Godefroid.

"I determined to devote the whole of my surplus income, about ten thousand francs a year, to acts of charity," continued Monsieur Alain tranquilly. "I met, about that time, a judge of the tribunal of the Seine, named Popinot, whom we had the misfortune to lose three years ago, and who for fifteen years was most active in all charitable work in the Saint-Marcel quarter. He, together with our venerable vicar of Nôtre-Dame and Madame, conceived the idea of starting the work in which we now co-operate, and which has done some little good secretly since 1825. The work has had a soul in Madame de la Chanterie, for she has been in very truth the soul of the whole enterprise. The vicar

has succeeded in making us more religious than we were at first, by proving to us the necessity of being virtuous ourselves in order to be able to inspire virtue, in order to preach from example. The farther we have advanced on that path the happier we have all found ourselves. Thus it was my repentance for having misunderstood the heart of my childhood's friend that gave me the idea of devoting to the poor, on my own account, the fortune which he brought back to me and which I accepted without crying out at the vastness of the sum returned as compared with the sum I had lent: its destination reconciled everything."

This story, told without emphasis and with touching simplicity of accent, gesture and expression, would have aroused in Godefroid the desire to enter that blessed, noble association, if he had not already made up his mind to do so.

"You know little of the world," he said, "to have such scruples concerning a matter that would not trouble anybody's conscience."

"I know none but the unfortunate," the good man rejoined. "I have no desire to know a world where people are so ready to think evil of one another.—It is almost midnight, and I have my chapter of the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* to meditate upon.—Good-night."

Godefroid grasped the good man's hand and pressed it with admiring warmth.

"Can you tell me Madame de la Chanterie's story?" he asked.

"That is impossible without her consent," the good man replied, "for it is connected with one of the most terrible incidents of the imperial régime. It was through my friend Bordin that I came to know Madame; he knows all the secrets of that noble life; it was he who brought me to this house, so to speak."

"However that may be," rejoined Godefroid, "I thank you for having told me your story; it contains some useful lessons for me."

"Do you know what the moral of it is?"

"Tell me," said Godefroid, "for I might see in it something different from what you see."

"Well, it is this," said the good man: "pleasure is an accident in the Christian's life, not its end, and we realize that too late."

"And what happens when one becomes a Christian?" queried Godefroid.

"Look!" said the good man.

He pointed out to Godefroid an inscription in gilt letters on a black ground, which the new lodger had never seen, as that was the first time he had been in the good man's room. He turned and read the words: TRANSIRE BENEFACIENDO.

"That, my child, is the meaning that life then takes on. That is our motto. If you become one of us, that will be the whole of your commission. We read that advice, which we give to one another, every hour in the day, when we rise, when we go to bed, when we dress. Ah! if you knew what boundless pleasure the carrying out of that motto affords!"

"What, for instance?" said Godefroid, hoping for revelations.

"In the first place, we are as rich as Baron de Nucingen. But the *Imitation of Jesus Christ* forbids our having anything of our own, we are only dispensers, and if we had a single feeling of vainglory, we should not be worthy to be dispensers. That would not be *transire benefaciendo*, it would be to enjoy by thought. If you should say to yourself with a certain dilation of the nostrils: 'I am playing the part of Providence!' as you might have said if you had been in my place this morning saving the lives of a whole family, you would be a Sardanapalus! a wicked man! Not one of these gentlemen thinks of himself when he does a good deed; one must strip himself of all vanity, all pride, all self-love, and that is a difficult task, I promise you!"

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Godefroid wished Monsieur Alain good night, and returned to his room deeply moved by his story; but his curiosity was rather excited than satisfied, for the great figure of the picture presented by that household was Madame de la Chanterie. The story of her life seemed to him such a desirable thing to know, that he made it the object of his sojourn at the Hôtel de la Chanterie. He already divined a charitable undertaking of vast scope in the association of those five persons, but he thought much less of it than of its heroine.

The neophyte passed several days watching more closely than he had done hitherto the choice spirits among whom he found himself, and he became the subject of a moral phenomenon which modern philanthropists have disdained—from ignorance perhaps. The sphere in which he was living had a positive effect upon Godefroid. The law that governs the physical nature relative to the influence of atmospheric surroundings upon the conditions of existence of developing organisms, governs the moral nature as well; whence it follows that the congregating of condemned men is one of the greatest social crimes, and their isolation an experiment of doubtful success. Condemned men should be placed in religious institutions and surrounded by

prodigies of good, instead of remaining amid miracles of evil. We have a right to expect absolute devotion on the part of the Church in that direction; if it sends missionaries among wild or uncivilized peoples, how joyfully should it entrust to religious orders the mission of receiving the wild men of civilization to catechize them! for every criminal is an atheist, often without knowing it. Godefroid found those five persons endowed with the qualities which they demanded of him; they were all without pride, without vanity, truly humble and devout, with none of the pretensions that go to make up *devotion*, using that word in its bad sense. Their virtues were contagious; he was seized with the desire to imitate those unknown heroes, and he ended by studying with passionate interest the book that he had begun by despising. In a fortnight he reduced life to its simplest form, to what it really is when considered from the lofty standpoint to which the religious spirit leads one. Lastly, his curiosity, which was at first so worldly and spurred on by so many commonplace motives, became purified; if he did not entirely renounce it, it was because it was difficult to lose his interest concerning Madame de la Chanterie; but he displayed, involuntarily, a degree of discretion which was appreciated by those men, whose faculties the divine Spirit developed to a most incredible extent, as may be said of all true monks, by the way. Concentration of the moral forces, by whatever system it is brought about, increases their scope tenfold.

"Our friend is not converted yet," said good Abbé de Vèze; "but he is anxious to be."

An unexpected incident hastened the telling of Madame de la Chanterie's story to Godefroid, so that his curiosity in her regard was speedily gratified in the most essential point.

All Paris was at that time deeply interested in the conclusion, at Barrière Saint-Jacques, of one of the ghastly criminal trials which mark epochs in the annals of our assize courts. The extraordinary interest aroused in the trial in question was due to the criminals, whose audacity, whose mental attainments, far superior to those of ordinary criminals, whose cynical replies terrified society. It is a fact worthy of note that no newspaper was admitted to the Hôtel de la Chanterie, and Godefroid only heard of the dismissal of the appeal taken by the accused, from his instructor in book-keeping, for the trial had taken place long before his installation at Madame de la Chanterie's.

"Do you ever fall in with such people as those infernal villains," he asked his future friends, "and, if you do, how do you act with them?"

"In the first place," said Monsieur Nicolas, "there are no infernal villains, there are diseased natures which should be confined at Charenton; but, outside of those infrequent exceptions, we see only men devoid of religious principles, or men who reason badly; and the mission of the charitable man is to uplift the minds of his fellows, to lead back into the straight road those who have gone astray."

"And everything is possible to the apostle," added Abbé de Vèze, "he has God on his side."

"Suppose you should be sent to those two convicted felons," said Godefroid, "you would make nothing out of them!"

"The time would be too short," observed Goodman Alain.

"As a general rule," said Monsieur Nicolas, "souls that are impenitent to the end are turned over to the ministrations of religion when the time is insufficient to perform miracles. The persons of whom you speak would have become men of the highest distinction in our hands, for their energy is most extraordinary; but as soon as they have committed a murder, it becomes impossible to do anything for them, human justice takes possession of them."

"So you are opposed to capital punishment?" queried Godefroid.

Monsieur Nicolas hastily rose and left the room.

"Never speak of capital punishment before Monsieur Nicolas! He recognized his own natural child in a criminal, whose execution his duty required him to superintend."

"And he was innocent!" added Monsieur Joseph.

At that moment, Madame de la Chanterie, who had left the salon for a few moments, returned.

"But you must admit," said Godefroid to Monsieur Joseph, "that society cannot exist without capital punishment, and that they whose heads are to be cut off to-morrow morning—"

Godefroid felt a strong hand placed over his mouth, and Abbé de Vèze led Madame de la Chanterie, pale and almost fainting, from the room.

"What have you done?" exclaimed Monsieur Joseph.—"Take him away, Alain!" he added, removing the hand with which he had gagged Godefroid. And he followed Abbé de Vèze to Madame's apartment.

"Come," said Monsieur Alain to Godefroid; "you have forced me to confide the secrets of Madame's life to you."

In a few moments the two friends were sitting together in Alain's room, as on the evening when the old man told the young man his own story.

"Well?" said Godefroid, whose face bore witness to his despair at having been the cause of what, in that pious household, might be called a catastrophe.

"I expect that Manon is coming to set our minds at rest," replied the good man, listening to the servant's footsteps on the stairs.

"Madame is doing well, monsieur. Monsieur l'Abbé has deceived her as to what was said!" said Manon, with an almost angry glance at Godefroid.

"*Great heaven!*" cried the poor fellow, his eyes filling with tears.

"Come, take a seat," said Monsieur Alain, setting the example.

He paused a moment to collect his thoughts.

"I do not know," began the good old man, "if I have the necessary talent to describe worthily a life so cruelly afflicted; you will forgive me if you find

the words of so feeble an orator ill-adapted to the acts and disasters with which that life is filled. Remember that I left school many years ago, and that I am the child of an age when much more attention was paid to the thought than to its effect—a prosaic age in which people knew no other way than to call things by their names."

Godefroid made a gesture of assent, in which Alain could detect sincere admiration, and which seemed to say: "I am listening."

"As you have just seen, my young friend," continued the old man, "it was impossible for you to remain longer among us without being made acquainted with some of the ghastly singularities of that saintlike woman's life. There are certain ideas, allusions, distressing words, which are absolutely forbidden in this house, under pain of reopening wounds in Madame's heart, the pain of which, once or twice renewed, might kill her."

"O my God!" cried Godefroid, "what have I done?"

"Except for Monsieur Joseph, who cut you short, foreseeing that you were on the point of mentioning the fatal instrument of death, you would have dealt poor Madame a crushing blow.—It is time that you should know everything, for you will belong to us, we are all convinced of it to-day.

"Madame de la Chanterie," he continued after a pause, "belongs to one of the first families of Basse Normandie. She was Mademoiselle Barbe-Philiberte de Champignelles, of a younger branch of that

family. So she was destined to take the veil, unless a marriage could be arranged for her with renunciation of her inheritance, according to the common practice in poor families. A certain Sieur de la Chanterie, whose family had fallen into the deepest obscurity, although it dates from the crusade of Philippe-Auguste, was anxious to recover the position in the province of Normandie which his ancient birth merited. He had lost caste in two ways, for he had amassed some three hundred thousand crowns in army contracts at the time of the war with Hanover. Relying overmuch upon that hoard, which provincial gossip exaggerated, the son at Paris led a life calculated to arouse a father's anxiety. Mademoiselle de Champignelles' qualities obtained some celebrity in Le Bessin. The old man, whose little fief of La Chanterie lies between Caen and Saint-Lô, heard people say that it seemed a pity that such an accomplished young woman, so capable of making a man happy, should end her days in a convent; and, when he expressed the purpose of looking up the young woman, he was led to believe that he might obtain Mademoiselle Philiberte's hand for his son, provided that he would take her without any dowry. He went to Bayeux, procured several interviews with the Champignelles family and was fascinated by the young woman's eminent qualities. At sixteen years Mademoiselle de Champignelles gave promise of all that she was one day to be. One could see that her character would be marked by steadfast piety, never-failing

good sense, inflexible probity, and that she had one of those hearts which never abandon an affection, even though they are commanded to do so. The old nobleman, enriched by his exactions from the troops, saw in that charming creature the woman who could hold his son in check by the authority of virtue, by the ascendency of a firm but in no sense rigid character: for, as you have seen, no one can be more gentle than Madame de la Chanterie; nor can anyone be more trustful than she; even in her declining years she has the unsuspecting nature of perfect innocence. In the old days she would never believe in evil; the slight tendency to distrust, which you have seen, is attributable to her misfortunes. The old man agreed with the Champignelles to renounce, in the marriage contract, all claim to Mademoiselle Philiberte's inheritance; but, by way of compensation, the Champignelles, who were allied to some great families, promised to obtain the elevation of the fief of La Chanterie to a barony, and they kept their word. Madame de Bolsfrelon, aunt of the future bridegroom and wife of the counselor of parliament who died in the apartment you now occupy, promised to bequeath her fortune to her nephew. When all these arrangements had been made between the two families, the father sent for his son. The young man, who was Master of Requests at the Grand Council, and was twenty-five years old at the time of his marriage, had indulged in some escapades with the young noblemen of the day and had adopted their mode of life;

so it happened that the old contractor had paid debts to a considerable amount several times over. The poor man, having a prevision of fresh backslidings on his son's part, was overjoyed to settle a certain amount upon his future daughter-in-law; but he was so suspicious that he entailed the fief of La Chanterie upon the male children to be born of the marriage.

"The Revolution," observed Alain parenthetically, "made that precaution unavailing.

"The young master of requests, being endowed with the beauty of an angel, and with wonderful dexterity in all forms of bodily exercise, possessed the gift of seduction. You will readily believe therefore that Mademoiselle de Champignelles fell very deeply in love with her husband. The old man, being extremely pleased with the auspicious beginning of their married life, and believing that his son had reformed, himself sent the newly-wedded pair to Paris. This happened early in 1788. There was almost a year of happiness. Madame de la Chanterie enjoyed all the little delicate attentions that a man overflowing with love can lavish upon a woman whom he loves. Short as it was, the honeymoon left its mark on that noble and unfortunate woman's heart. In those days, you know, mothers used to nurse their children themselves, and Madame had a daughter. That period, during which a wife should be the object of redoubled tenderness, was on the contrary the beginning of shocking misery. The master of requests was compelled to sell all the

property he could dispose of, to pay old debts that he had not confessed, and new gambling debts. Then the National Assembly soon decreed the dissolution of the Grand Council and the Parliament, and the abolition of all the judicial offices, which had been bought at so high a price. The young household, increased by a daughter, was thus left without other resources than the income of the entailed property and the dowry settled upon Madame de la Chanterie. In twenty months from her marriage that lovely woman, at the age of seventeen and a half, was reduced to the necessity of working with her hands, in the obscure quarter to which she withdrew, in order to support herself and the child she was nursing. She was entirely deserted by her husband, who fell, step by step, into the society of creatures of the lowest order. Madame never reproached her husband, she never claimed to have been wronged in any way. She has told us that, during those evil days, she prayed to God for her dear Henri—

"The villain's name was Henri," observed Monsieur Alain; "it is a name never to be uttered before her, and so is Henriette. I resume.

"Never leaving her little room on Rue de la Corderie-du-Temple, except to go out for provisions or for her work, Madame de la Chanterie succeeded in making both ends meet, thanks to a hundred francs per month, which her father-in-law, deeply touched by her courage, sent to her. Nevertheless, realizing that that source of supply might fail her, the poor young wife had adopted the laborious trade

of stay-maker, and worked for a famous dress-maker. In due time the old contractor died, and his inheritance was devoured by his son, by favor of the laws overthrowing the monarchy. The former master of requests, having become one of the most bloodthirsty presidents of the Revolutionary Tribunal, was the terror of all Normandie and was enabled to gratify all his evil passions. Imprisoned in his turn at the time of the fall of Robespierre, the universal execration of his department marked him out for certain death. Madame de la Chanterie learned by a farewell letter the fate that awaited her husband. Having placed her little daughter in charge of a neighbor, she betook herself immediately to the town where the wretch was confined, armed with a few louis which comprised her whole fortune; those louis enabled her to gain access to him in prison. She succeeded in rescuing her husband by dressing him in her clothes, a method almost identical with that which served Madame de la Valette so well at a later period. She was sentenced to death, but a feeling of shame prevented them from taking their revenge in that way, and the tribunal formerly presided over by her husband secretly facilitated her release from prison. She returned to Paris on foot, penniless, sleeping in farmhouses and often fed by charity."

"My God!" cried Godefroid.

"Wait!" continued the good man, "that is nothing. In eight years the poor woman saw her husband three times. The first time monsieur

remained twice twenty-four hours in his wife's modest lodging and took all her money, overwhelming her with tokens of affection and making her believe in his complete conversion.

" 'I was powerless,' she said, 'against a man for whom I prayed every day and who filled my mind to the exclusion of everything else.'

"The second time Monsieur de la Chanterie appeared in a dying condition, and with such a disease!—She nursed him and saved his life; then she tried to lead him back to decent sentiments and a decent mode of life. After promising everything that that angel asked of him, the revolutionist plunged once more into horrible excesses, and escaped the inquisition of the police authorities only by taking refuge with his wife, where he died in safety—

"Oh! that is nothing," cried the good man, remarking the amazement depicted on Godefroid's face. "No one in the circle in which the man lived knew that he was married. Two years after the vile creature's death, Madame de la Chanterie learned that there existed a second Madame de la Chanterie, a widow like herself, and like herself destitute. The bigamist had found two angels incapable of betraying him.

"About 1803," continued Monsieur Alain after a pause, "Monsieur de Boisfrelon, Madame de la Chanterie's uncle, having been struck off the list of *émigrés*, came to Paris and delivered to her two hundred thousand francs which the old contractor

had placed in his hands long before, with instructions to keep it for his niece's children. He persuaded the widow to return to Normandie, where she finished her daughter's education, and, still acting on the former magistrate's advice, purchased a patrimonial estate on excellent terms."

"Ah!" cried Godefroid.

"That is nothing," said Goodman Alain, "we haven't arrived at the hurricanes yet. I resume. In 1807, after four years of repose, Madame de la Chanterie married her only daughter to a gentleman, whose antecedents, religious principles and wealth afforded guaranties of every sort; a man who, as the popular saying went, was *the darling* of the best society of the chief town in the prefecture where Madame and her daughter passed the winter. Observe that that society consisted of seven or eight families numbered among the exalted nobility of France, the D'Esgrignons, the Troisvilles, the Casterans, the Nouâtres, etc. After eighteen months, that man left his wife and disappeared in Paris, where he changed his name. Madame de la Chanterie was unable to learn the causes of that separation except by the bright glare of the lightning, in the midst of the tempest. Her daughter, who had been educated with the most painstaking care in the purest religious sentiments, maintained absolute silence concerning that event. Her lack of confidence made a deep impression upon Madame de la Chanterie. On several previous occasions she had noticed in her daughter some traces of the

father's adventurous character, but emphasized by almost masculine decision. Her husband went away with her full permission, leaving his affairs in pitiable shape. To this day Madame de la Chanterie has not recovered from her surprise at that catastrophe, which no human power could have remedied. The people whom she prudently consulted had all said that the young man's fortune was unencumbered and definitely fixed, invested in unmortgaged real estate; whereas the property had been, for ten years, pledged for more than its value. So the real estate was sold, and the unfortunate bride, reduced to her own resources, returned to her mother. Madame de la Chanterie learned later that the man had been upheld by the most respectable men in the province, in the interest of their own claims against him; for the scoundrel owed them all more or less. So Madame de la Chanterie had been looked upon as a suitable victim from her first arrival in the province. However, there were other moving causes of that disaster, which will be made clear to you by a confidential document which was laid before the Emperor. The fellow had, moreover, won the good-will of the royalist leaders in the department by his devotion to the royal cause during the tempestuous days of the Revolution. One of the most active emissaries of Louis XVIII., he had had a hand in all the conspiracies since 1793, extricating himself so cunningly, with such adroitness, that he eventually aroused the suspicion of his co-workers. Having been removed by Louis XVIII. from his offices,

and not being consulted in any subsequent affairs, he returned to his estates, which had even then been impaired for a long while. These antecedents, then little known—for those who were admitted to the secrets of the royal closet held their peace concerning such a dangerous co-worker—made him the object of a sort of cult in a town devoted to the Bourbons, where the most barbarous methods adopted by the Chouans were looked upon as honorable warfare. The D'Esgrignons, the Casterans, the Chevalier de Valois, in a word, the aristocracy and the church opened their arms to the royalist diplomat and took him in their lap. Their inclination to patronize him was confirmed by the anxiety of his creditors to be paid. The miserable wretch, a fitting successor to the late De la Chanterie, succeeded in holding himself in check for three years, he affected the most profound piety and imposed silence on his vices. During the first months that he and his young wife lived together, he exerted some influence over her; he tried to corrupt her with his doctrines—if atheism can be called a doctrine—and by the jesting tone in which he spoke of the most sacred things. This backstairs diplomatist, on his return to the province, formed a close intimacy with a young man who was swallowed up in debt like himself, but whose frankness and courage were as noteworthy as the other's hypocrisy and cowardice. This guest, whose charming manners, whose genial nature and adventurous life were well adapted to influence a young woman, was like a

tool in the husband's hands, and he used him to support his abominable theories. The girl never let her mother suspect the pit into which chance had thrown her, for mere human forethought seems nothing at all when we think of the minute precautions taken by Madame de la Chanterie in arranging for the marriage of her only daughter. This last blow, in a life so pure, so devout, so religious as that of a woman afflicted by such a succession of misfortunes, aroused in Madame de la Chanterie a distrust of herself, which kept her the more aloof from her daughter, because the latter, in exchange for her evil fortune, demanded almost absolute freedom, domineered over her mother and even spoke harshly to her sometimes. Wounded thus in all her affections, betrayed in her devoted love for her husband, to whom she had sacrificed her happiness, her fortune and her life, without a murmur; deceived in the exclusively religious education she had given her daughter, deceived by society itself in the affair of the marriage, and failing to obtain justice in the heart in which she had sown none but worthy sentiments, she clung more closely to God, whose hand was so heavy upon her. The quasi-nun went to church every morning, she inflicted the harshest monastic penances upon herself and saved money in order to assist the poor.

"Can you imagine a more saintlike, more grievously afflicted life than that noble woman's thus far, so patient in misfortune, so brave in danger, and always so Christlike?" said the good man, glancing

at the marveling Godefroid. "You know Madame, you know whether she lacks good sense, sound judgment, reflection; she has all those qualities in the highest degree. Very good; those misfortunes, which would be sufficient to lead one to say of a life that it surpasses all others in hardship, are as nothing compared to what God had in store for that woman.—Let us now devote our attention exclusively to Madame de la Chanterie's daughter," said the good man, resuming his narrative.

"At eighteen, Mademoiselle de la Chanterie's age when she was married, she was a girl of exceedingly delicate complexion, dark, with brilliant coloring, slender and sweetly pretty. Above a brow of noble outline grew a profusion of lovely black hair, in harmony with her sparkling, brown eyes. Her somewhat delicate features were misleading as to her real character and her masculine firmness. She had small hands, small feet, and a suggestion of fragility in her whole person that excluded any idea of strength or vivacity. Having always lived with her mother, she was as innocent as a child in the matter of morals and remarkably devout. Like Madame de la Chanterie, she was a fanatical partisan of the Bourbons, an enemy of the French Revolution, and acknowledged the supremacy of Napoléon only as a scourge that Providence inflicted upon France in punishment for the crimes of 1793. The harmony in the matter of political opinions between the mother-in-law and son-in-law was, as it always is under such circumstances, a decisive argument in

favor of the marriage, which, moreover, all the aristocracy of the province were interested in bringing about. The wretch's chosen friend had commanded a party of Chouans in the uprising of 1799. It seems that the baron—Madame de la Chanterie's son-in-law was a baron—had no other purpose in encouraging an attachment between his wife and his friend, than to avail himself of it to demand assistance and succor from them. Although overwhelmed with debts and without apparent means of existence, the young adventurer lived very well, and could easily lend a helping hand to the organizer of royalist conspiracies.

"I must say a few words here concerning an association that was causing a great deal of excitement at that time," said Monsieur Alain, interrupting his narrative. "I refer to the *burners*. Every province in the West was more or less afflicted by those marauders, whose object was not so much plunder as a renewal of the royalist war. They made the most, it was said, of the great number of persons dissatisfied with the law relating to conscription, which was executed then, as you know, with a harshness that amounted to an abuse. Between Mortagne and Rennes, and even beyond, as far as the banks of the Loire, there were nocturnal depredations which, in that part of Normandie, bore most heavily on those who were in possession of estates bought of the nation. Those bands caused profound alarm throughout the country districts. I shall not put the fact too strongly if I

say that, in certain departments, the action of the authorities was long paralyzed. These last echoes of the civil war did not make so much noise as you might think, accustomed as we are to-day to the horrible publicity given by the press to the most trifling political or private trials. The system followed by the imperial government was that of all absolute governments. The censorship permitted the publication of nothing on political subjects, except accomplished facts, and even those were travestied. If you would take the trouble to run over the files of the *Moniteur* and the other newspapers then in existence, even those of the West, you would not find a word of four or five criminal trials which cost sixty or eighty brigands their lives. That name of brigands, given during the Revolutionary epoch to the Vendéans, the Chouans and all those who took up arms for the Bourbons, was retained judicially under the Empire for the royalist victims of isolated conspiracies. In the eyes of some passionate royalists, the Emperor and his government were the enemy, everything that could be taken from him seemed to be lawful prize. I explain these opinions to you without undertaking to justify them, and I resume.

"Now," he said, after one of the pauses necessary in long narratives, "given these royalists ruined by the civil war of 1793 and swayed by violent passions; given some exceptional characters consumed by poverty, like Madame de la Chanterie's son-in-law and his friend the former Chouan leader, you can

understand how they could make up their minds to commit, in their own private interest, acts of brigandage, which their political opinions justified, against the imperial government, to the profit of the good cause. The young Chouan therefore turned his attention to rekindling the embers of Chouannerie, in order to be ready to act at the opportune moment. About that time the Emperor was in a terribly critical position, being shut up in the island of Lobau and apparently on the point of going down before the simultaneous attack of England and Austria. The victory of Wagram rendered the conspiracy that had been set on foot in the interior practically harmless. The hope of rekindling civil war in Bretagne, Vendée and a part of Normandie coincided by a fatal chance with the upsetting of the baron's affairs; he flattered himself with the prospect of organizing an expedition, the profits of which would be applied exclusively to saving his own estates. With great nobility of feeling, his wife and his friend refused to divert for any private purposes the sums taken by force and arms from the coffers of the State and intended for the pay of the discontented spirits and the Chouans, and for procuring arms and ammunition in anticipation of an uprising. When, after several acrimonious disputes, the young Chouan, supported by the wife, had positively refused to reserve for the husband a hundred thousand francs in crowns, which sum they were expecting to take from the funds in the hands of one of the receivers-general in the West, for the

benefit of the royal army, the baron disappeared to avoid the hot pursuit of several warrants for his arrest. The creditors attempted to levy on the wife's property, and the miserable wretch had dried up the spring of the sentiment that impels a wife to sacrifice herself for her husband. That is what poor Madame de la Chanterie knew nothing about, but it is nothing to the plot concealed behind this preliminary explanation.

"It is too late to-night," said the good man after glancing at his little clock, "it would take too long if I should undertake to tell you the rest of the story. My friend, old Bordin, who became illustrious in the annals of the royalist party through his conduct of the famous Simeuse trial, and who defended the so-called *burners* of Mortagne, lent me, at the time I came here to live, two documents which I have kept, for he died shortly after. You will find the facts much more concisely stated in them than I could tell them to you. They are so numerous that I should lose myself in the details, and it would take me more than two hours; whereas, in those papers you will have them all summarized. To-morrow morning I will tell you the rest of the story so far as Madame de la Chanterie is concerned, for you will be so well informed by what you will have read that I shall be able to finish in a few words." The good man handed several papers yellowed by lapse of time to Godefroid, who, after wishing his neighbor good-night, withdrew to his own room, where, before retiring, he read the two documents which follow:

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"INDICTMENT

"*Special Criminal Court for the Department of the Orne*

"The procureur-général of the Imperial Court at Caen, being instructed to appear in his official capacity at the special criminal court created by imperial decree under date of September, 1809, and sitting at Alençon, presents to the court the following facts which appear from the preliminary procedure:

"A conspiracy of brigands, conceived with much deliberation and of extraordinary extent, which is connected with a scheme for an uprising throughout the departments of the West, made itself manifest in divers assaults upon citizens and depredations upon their property, but notably by the attack with force and arms upon a vehicle engaged in transporting funds from the receiver-general at Caen, for account of the State, on the — day of May, 180–, and the robbery thereof. That crime, which recalls deplorable memories of a civil war happily at an end, was accompanied by flagitious circumstances no longer justified by the heat of passion.

"From its origin to its results, the plot is a complicated one, its details are numerous: the investigation lasted more than a year; but the evidence,

following close upon the heels of the crime, throws a bright light upon its preparation, its execution and its consequences.

"The idea of the conspiracy is chargeable to one Charles-Amédée-Louis-Joseph-Rifoël, who styles himself Chevalier du Vissard, born at Vissard in the commune of Saint-Mexme, near Ernée, a former leader of rebels.

"This culprit, who was pardoned by His Majesty the Emperor and King at the time of the final pacification, and who has acknowledged the sovereign's magnanimity only by fresh crimes, has heretofore, at the time the last punishments were inflicted, suffered the penalty merited by so many offences; but it is necessary to recall some of his acts, for he exerted great influence over the culprits at present before the court, and he is connected with every detail of the trial.

"This dangerous agitator, disguised, according to the custom among the rebels, under the name of Pierrot, wandered through the departments of the West, gathering up the elements of a new outbreak; but his most secure shelter was the château of Saint-Savin, the residence of one Dame Lechantre and her daughter, Dame Bryond, and situated in the commune of Saint-Savin and arrondissement of Mortagne. That strategic point is reminiscent of the most terrible incidents of the rebellion of 1799. There it was that the courier was murdered, his vehicle robbed by a band of brigands under the command of a woman, assisted by the too famous

Marche-à-Terre. Thus it will be seen that brigandage is, in some sort, endemic in the neighborhood.

"An intimacy which we will not attempt to describe had existed for more than a year between Dame Bryond and the said Rifoël.

"It was in that commune that an interview took place, in April 1808, between the said Rifoël and Boislaurier, one of the principal leaders and known by the name of Auguste in the deplorable rebellions of the West; it is he whose mind directed the affair now before the court.

"The obscure point of the relations between these two leaders, being triumphantly established by numerous witnesses, has furthermore the authority of *res judicata*, by virtue of the conviction of the said Rifoël.

"The said Boislaurier made arrangements at that interview with the said Rifoël to act in concert with him.

"These two, and they alone at first, communicated to each other their baleful schemes, inspired by the absence of His Royal and Imperial Majesty, who was then at the head of his armies in Spain. At that interview they seem to have determined upon the abduction of the sums received for taxes by the State as the fundamental base of their operations.

"Some time later one Dubut, of Caen, despatches an emissary to the château of Saint-Savin, one Hiley, alias Le Laboureur, long known as a robber

of diligences, to furnish information concerning the men who could be trusted.

"Thus it was that, through the said Hiley's intervention, the conspirators procured at the outset the co-operation of one Herbomez, alias Général-Hardi, an ex-rebel of the same stamp as Rifoël and like him false to the terms of the amnesty.

"The said Herbomez and Hiley thereupon enlisted in the neighboring communes seven bandits whom we must hasten to introduce, and who are:

"1st. Jean Cibot, called Pille-Miche, one of the boldest brigands of the band organized by Montauran in the year VII., one of the authors of the attack upon and death of the courier of Mortagne;

"2d. François Lisieux, otherwise called Le Grand-Fils, a malcontent conscript of the department of Mayenne;

"3d. Charles Grenier, called Fleur-de-Genêt, deserter from the 69th demi-brigade;

"4th. Gabriel Bruce, called Gros-Jean, one of the most savage Chouans of the Fontaine division;

"5th. Jacques Horeau, called Le Stuart, ex-lieutenant of the same demi-brigade, and one of the trusted friends of Tinténiac, well known for his participation in the Quiberon expedition;

"6th. Marie-Anne Cabot, called Lajeunesse, a former huntsman in the employ of Sieur Carol of Alençon;

"7th. Louis Minard, rebel.

"These recruits were quartered in three different communes in the houses of one Binet, one Mélin

and one Laravinière, keepers of wineshops or inns, and all devoted to Rifoël.

"The necessary weapons were immediately furnished by Sieur Jean-François Léveillé, notary, an incorrigible correspondent of the brigands, the intermediary between them and several leaders in hiding; and by one Felix Courceuil, called Le Confesseur, formerly a surgeon in the rebel armies in La Vendée—both of Alençon.

"Eleven muskets were hidden in the house owned by Sieur Bryond in the suburbs of Alençon, without his knowledge; for he was then living on his country estate between Alençon and Mortagne.

"When Sieur Bryond left his wife, abandoning her to her own devices on the fatal path she had chosen to follow, those muskets were mysteriously removed from the house and taken by Dame Bryond in her carriage to the château of Saint-Savin.

"Then it was that the acts of brigandage took place in the department of the Orne and the adjacent departments, taking the authorities by surprise no more completely than the inhabitants of those districts which have been so long at peace, and demonstrating that these odious foes of the government and of the French Empire had been admitted to the secret of the coalition of 1809, by their correspondents in foreign countries.

"The said notary, Léveillé, Dame Bryond, Dubut of Caen, Herbomez of Mayenne, Boislaurier of Le Mans, and Rifoël, were therefore the leaders of the association, to which the culprits already executed

by virtue of the judgment against them in conjunction with Rifoël gave in their adhesion, also those who are made defendants in the present indictment and several others who have escaped the action of the public vengeance by flight or because of the silence of their accomplices.

"It was the said Dubut who, having his domicile near Caen, notified the said Léveillé, notary, of the despatch of the funds. Thereafter Dubut makes several journeys from Caen to Mortagne, and Léveillé also is frequently seen on the roads.

"It should be noted at this point that, at the time the muskets were removed, Léveillé, who met the said Bruce, Grenier and Cibot in Mélin's house, having found them arranging the muskets under a lean-to inside, himself assisted in the operation.

"A general rendezvous was appointed at the *Ecu de France* hotel at Mortagne. All the defendants assembled there under different disguises. Then it was that Léveillé, Dame Bryond, Dubut, Herbomez, Boislaurier and Hiley, the most adroit of the secondary conspirators, as Cibot is the boldest, assured themselves of the co-operation of one Vauthier, called Vieux-Chêne, a hostler at the hotel, formerly a servant in the employ of the famous Longuy. Vauthier consented to notify Dame Bryond when the tax-collector's carriage passed, as it ordinarily stopped at the hotel.

"The moment soon arrived for assembling the enlisted brigands, who had been scattered about in several houses, some in one commune, some in

another, under the management of Courceuil and Léveillé. The junction was effected under the auspices of Dame Bryond, who furnished the brigands with a new place of retreat in an uninhabited wing of the château of Saint-Savin, a few leagues from Mortagne, where she had lived with her mother since her separation from her husband. The brigands, Hiley at their head, take up their quarters there and remain there several days. Dame Bryond, assisted by one Godard, her maid, gives her personal attention to the preparation of everything necessary for boarding and lodging such guests. To that end she orders bundles of hay carried to the brigands, she visits them in the shelter with which she provided them and goes back and forth several times with Léveillé. The provisions and supplies are carried to them under the direction and by the efforts of Courceuil, who receives his orders from Rifoël and Boislaurier.

"The main expedition takes shape, the armament is completed; the brigands leave their hiding-place at Saint-Savin; they operate by night, awaiting the passage of the tax-collector, and the province is alarmed by their repeated aggressions.

"It is beyond question that the offences committed at La Sartinière, at Vonay, at the château of Saint-Seny were committed by this band, whose audacity equals their villainy, and who have succeeded in inspiring such terror that their victims all hold their peace, so that the authorities are restricted to presumptions.

"But, while compelling contributions from the purchasers of national property, these brigands carefully explored the wood of Chesnay, selected as the theatre of their crimes.

"The village of Louvigny is not far away. There is a public-house in that village kept by the brothers Chaussard, former keepers on the Troisville estate, which was to serve as the final rendezvous of the brigands. The two brothers knew in advance the part they had to play; Courceuil and Boislaurier had long before made overtures to them to rekindle their hatred against the government of our august emperor, informing them that, among the guests who would come to their house, would be certain men of their acquaintance, the redoubtable Hiley and the no less redoubtable Cibot.

"On the 6th the seven bandits, under the guidance of Hiley, arrive at the brothers Chaussard's hostelry, and pass two days there. On the 8th their leader takes them away again, saying that they propose to march about three leagues, and he orders the two brothers to furnish them with supplies, which are taken to a fork in the road not far from the village. Hiley returns alone to the inn and sleeps there.

"Two mounted men, presumably Dame Bryond and Rifoël,—for it is asserted that that lady accompanied Rifoël on his expedition, in the saddle and disguised as a man,—arrive during the evening and converse with Hiley.

"The following day Hiley writes a letter to

Léveillé the notary, which is delivered by one of the brothers Chaussard, who returns at once with a reply.

"Two hours later Dame Bryond and Rifoël arrive on horseback and converse with Hiley.

"The result of all these conferences, of all this going and coming, is that they must have an axe to break open the chests. The notary escorts Dame Bryond to Saint-Savin and they search in vain for an axe there. The notary returns, meets Hiley half way and informs him that they have no axe.

"Hiley returns to the inn, orders supper for ten persons, and introduces the seven brigands, now all armed. Hiley orders them to stack their arms in military fashion. They take their seats at the table, eat their supper in haste, and Hiley asks to be supplied with provisions in abundance to take away with them. Then he takes the elder Chaussard apart and asks him for an axe. The innkeeper, greatly surprised if we are to believe what he says, refuses to furnish it. Courceuil and Boislaurier arrive; the night slips away and the three men pass the time pacing the floor and talking over their schemes. Courceuil, alias Le Confesseur, the most crafty of all the brigands, obtains possession of an axe; and about two o'clock in the morning they all leave the house by different exits.

"Moments are becoming precious, for the execution of the crime was appointed for that fatal day. Hiley, Courceuil, Boislaurier bring up their forces and station them. Hiley goes into ambush, with

Minard, Cabot and Bruce, at the right of Chesnay wood. Boislaurier, Grenier and Horeau take up their positions in the centre. Courceuil, Herbomez and Lisieux stand on the edge of the wood. All these stations are indicated on the geometrical plan prepared by the engineer of the registry office and annexed to the papers.

"Meanwhile the carrier's wagon had left Mortagne at one o'clock in the morning, driven by one Rousseau, whose guilty knowledge seems so evident from the circumstances, that his arrest seemed essential. The vehicle, moving slowly, was due to reach Chesnay wood about three o'clock.

"A single gendarme acted as escort; they were to breakfast at Donnery. Three passengers walked with the gendarme from time to time.

"The driver, who had walked very slowly with them, when he reached the bridge of Chesnay, at the beginning of the wood of that name, urges his horses with an energy and animation that attract attention, and turns into a crossroad called the Senzey road. The vehicle passes from sight, its course being indicated only by the tinkling of the bells; the gendarme and the passengers quicken their pace to overtake it. They hear the words: 'Stop there, villains!' followed by four musket shots.

"The gendarme, not being wounded, draws his sabre and runs in the direction he supposes the wagon to have taken. He is stopped by four armed men who fire upon him; his ardor saves his life, for he darts back to bid one of the young passengers

go to give the alarm at Chesnay; but two brigands rush upon him and take aim at him; he is compelled to fall back a few steps, and thereupon receives in the left armpit, as he is trying to watch the wood, a bullet that has broken his arm; he falls and suddenly finds himself *hors de combat.*

"The shouts and the firing have been heard at Donnery. The brigadier and one of the gendarmes of that village hurry to the spot; a sustained fire attracts them to the opposite side of the wood from that where the pillage is in progress. The gendarme tries to frighten the brigands by shouting in such a way as to indicate the arrival of fictitious reinforcements. He cries:

"'Forward! This way, the first platoon! We have them! The second platoon this way!'

"The brigands, in reply, shout:

"'To arms! This way, comrades! More men, quick!'

"The rattle of the musketry prevents the brigadier from hearing the cries of the wounded gendarme, or from assisting in the similar manœuvre by which the other gendarme holds the brigands in check; but he can distinguish a noise nearer at hand, the shattering and breaking open of the money-chests. He advances in that direction; four armed bandits detain him.

"'Surrender, villains!' he cries.

"They retort:

"'Come no nearer or you're a dead man!'

"The brigadier rides forward, two shots are fired,

and he is wounded; a bullet passes through his left leg and enters his horse's side. The gallant officer, bathed in his own blood, is forced to abandon the unequal combat; he cries, but in vain:

"'Help! The brigands are in Chesnay wood!'

"The brigands, remaining masters of the field, thanks to their number, searched the wagon, which was driven into a ravine for that purpose. They covered the driver's head as a blind. They broke open the chests, the ground was strewn with bags of money. The horses were unharnessed and the money loaded upon the horses. They scorned three thousand francs in copper, and carried away the sum of one hundred and three thousand francs upon four horses. They went in the direction of the hamlet of Menneville, which adjoins the village of Saint-Savin. The band with their booty stopped at an isolated house belonging to the brothers Chaussard and occupied by their uncle, one Bourget, who was privy to the plot from the beginning. That old man, assisted by his wife, welcomes the brigands, enjoins silence upon them, unloads the money, and goes to draw liquor for them to drink. The woman does sentry duty in the direction of the château. The old man unharnesses the horses, leads them back to the wood, restores them to the driver, sets free two of the passengers who had been bound, as had the obliging driver. Having taken a brief rest the bandits resume their march. Courceuil, Hiley, Boislaurier pass their accomplices in review; and, after bestowing a very moderate compensation upon

each of them, the leaders scatter, each going his own way.

"Upon reaching a spot called Champ-Landry, the miscreants, obeying the voice which impels all such wretches to plunge headlong into the contradictions and false reckonings of crime, throw their muskets into a field of grain. That action, performed by common consent, was the last indication of their mutual undertaking. Terror-stricken by the impudence of their wicked deed and by its very success, they disperse.

"The robbery once accomplished with the accompaniments of murder and assault with arms, the scene changes and other actors appear in connection with the proceeds of the robbery and its disposition.

"Rifoël, in hiding in Paris, whence his hand has guided every thread of the plot, transmits to Léveillé an order to send him fifty thousand francs as soon as possible.

"Courceuil, who was familiar with all the details of the crime, had already sent Hiley to inform Léveillé of their success and of his arrival at Mortagne. Léveillé goes thither.

"Vauthier, upon whose fidelity they believed that they could rely, undertakes to go to the Chaussards' uncle; he arrives at the house, the old man tells him that he must apply to his nephews, who have delivered large sums to Dame Bryond. He bids him wait on the road, however, and gives him a bag containing twelve hundred francs, which Vauthier carries to Dame Lechantre for her daughter.

"At the urgent request of Léveillé, Vauthier returns to Bourget, who, on this occasion, sends him directly to his nephews. The elder Chaussard leads Vauthier into the woods, points out a certain tree to him, and at its foot he finds a bag containing one thousand francs buried. Subsequently Léveillé, Hiley, Vauthier, all make journeys to the wood, and every time a trifling sum, compared to the total amount stolen, is given them.

"Madame Lechantre receives these sums at Mortagne, and, upon receipt of a letter of instruction from her daughter, transports them to Saint-Savin, whither Dame Bryond had returned.

"This is not the moment to inquire whether the woman Lechantre had prior knowledge of the conspiracy.

"It is sufficient for the present to observe that she leaves Mortagne to go to Saint-Savin on the day preceding the execution of the crime and bring her daughter away; that they meet after accomplishing half the distance between these points, and return to Mortagne; that, on the day following, the notary, advised by Hiley, goes from Alençon to Mortagne, immediately calls upon them and induces them, later, to carry the funds obtained with such difficulty from the brothers Chaussard and Bourget to a house at Alençon, concerning which we shall soon have something to say, the house of Sieur Pannier, a tradesman.

"Dame Lechantre writes to the keeper at Saint-Savin to come to Mortagne and drive herself and her daughter toward Alençon by an unfrequented road.

"The money, amounting to twenty thousand francs in all, is loaded at night, and the Godard girl assists in the loading.

"The notary had marked out the road to be followed. They reached the inn kept by one of the faithful, one Louis Chargegrain, in the commune of Littray. Despite the precautions taken by the notary, who rode out to meet the carriage, there were witnesses present, who saw the portmanteaus and sacks containing the money taken from the carriage.

"But, at the moment that Courceuil and Hiley, disguised as women, upon a public square in Alençon, were consulting with Sieur Pannier, treasurer of the rebels since 1794 and a devoted adherent of Rifoël, as to the means of forwarding to Rifoël the sum he requested, the terror caused by the first arrests and by the investigation set on foot reached such a point, that Dame Lechantre, becoming anxious, fled in the night time from the inn where she was, taking her daughter with her by devious paths, and took refuge in the secret hiding-places of the château of Saint-Savin. The same fright seized upon the other culprits. Courceuil, Boislaurier and his kinsman Dubut changed two thousand francs in silver crowns for gold at a money-changer's, and fled to England by way of Bretagne.

"Upon their arrival at Saint-Savin, Dames Lechantre and Bryond learned of the arrests of Bourget, the driver of the wagon, and the refractory conscripts.

"The magistrates, the gendarmerie, the authorities were dealing such well-aimed blows that it seemed urgently necessary to remove Dame Bryond beyond the reach of judicial investigation, for she was an object of devotion to all the miscreants, who were fascinated by her. Therefore Dame Bryond leaves Saint-Savin and conceals herself, first in Alençon, where her faithful followers take counsel together and succeed in concealing her in Pannier's cellar.

"At this point, the affair takes on a different aspect.

"After the arrest of Bourget and his wife, the Chaussards refused to deliver any more of the money, claiming that they had been betrayed. That unexpected defection happened at the moment when the most urgent need of money was felt by all the conspirators, in order to assure their safety if for no other purpose. Rifoël was thirsty for money. Hiley, Cibot, Léveillé began to distrust the brothers Chaussard.

"At this point occurs a new incident, which calls for rigorous treatment at the hands of the authorities.

"Two gendarmes detailed to discover Dame Bryond's hiding-place succeed in making their way into Pannier's house, they are present at a conference there; but these men, being unworthy of the confidence of their superiors, instead of arresting Dame Bryond, fall victims to her fascinations. These unworthy officials, Ratel and Mallet by name, lavish upon her demonstrations of the warmest interest,

and offer to escort her safely to the Chaussards, in order that she may force them to disgorge.

"Dame Bryond sets out on horseback, disguised in male attire, attended by Ratel, Mallet and the Godard girl. She travels by night. She reaches her destination; she has an animated interview, alone, with one of the brothers Chaussard. She had armed herself with a pistol, having determined to blow out her accomplice's brains in case of refusal; but he takes her into the woods, whence she returns with a heavy bag. On her return she finds in the bag copper coins and twelve sou pieces, amounting to fifteen hundred francs.

"Thereupon it is proposed that all the conspirators who can be gotten together make a descent on the Chaussards, seize upon them and put them to the torture.

"Pannier, upon learning of the failure of the expedition, flies into a rage and indulges in dire threats; and Dame Bryond, although threatening him in return with Rifoël's wrath, is forced to fly.

"All these details are included in the confession of Ratel.

"Mallet, touched by her plight, offers Dame Bryond shelter. They all go to the forest of Troisville to pass the night. Thence Mallet and Ratel, accompanied by Hiley and Cibot, repair during the night to the house of the brothers Chaussard; but they learn that the two brothers have left the province, and that the balance of the money is certainly out of their reach.

"This was the last effort of the plotters to obtain possession of the proceeds of the robbery.

"At this time it will be well to point out the precise part played by each of the authors of this crime.

"Dubut, Boislaurier, Gentil, Herbomez, Courceuil and Hiley are the principal offenders, some plotting, others acting.

"Boislaurier, Dubut and Courceuil, all three of whom are fugitives from justice, are accustomed to rebellion, fomenters of trouble, implacable enemies of Napoleon the Great, of his victories, of his dynasty, of his government, of our new laws and of the imperial constitution.

"Herbomez and Hiley have audaciously helped to execute with their arms what their brains conceived.

"The guilt of the seven instruments of the crime, to wit: Cibot, Lisieux, Grenier, Bruce, Horeau, Cabot, Minard, is notorious; it is proved by the confessions of those of them who are in the grasp of the law, for Lisieux died during the preliminary examination and Bruce is a fugitive.

"The conduct of Rousseau the driver is stamped with guilty knowledge. His moderation on the road, the precipitate speed to which he urged his horses at the entrance to the forest, his persistence in declaring that his head was covered, whereas, according to the testimony of the passengers, the leader of the brigands ordered his handkerchief to be taken off and bade him identify them,—all these facts afford the strongest presumption of complicity.

"Turning to Dame Bryond and the notary Léveillé, how could complicity be more continuous and more clearly proven than theirs? They constantly provided the means of committing the crime, they knew all about it, they aided and abetted in it. Léveillé traveled hither and thither upon all sorts of errands. Dame Bryond invented stratagem upon stratagem; she risked everything, even her life, to assure the recovery of the funds. She lends her château, her carriage, she is in the plot from the beginning; she did not deter the principal promoter, when she might have exerted her guilty influence to that end. She involved her maid, Godard. Léveillé was so deeply interested in the execution of the scheme, that he tried to obtain the axe that the brigands desired.

"The wife of Bourget, Vauthier, the Chaussards, Pannier, Dame Lechantre, Mallet and Ratel were all participants in the crime in different degrees, as were the innkeepers Mélin, Binet, Laravinière and Chargegrain.

"Bourget died during the preliminary examination, after making a confession which removes all doubt as to the part taken by Vauthier and by Dame Bryond; and, although he attempted to lighten the burden of the charges against his wife and his nephews the Chaussards, the motive of his reticence regarding them is easily understood.

"But the Chaussards knowingly furnished aid and comfort to the brigands, they saw them with arms in their hands, they witnessed all their preparations,

and they allowed the axe required for breaking open the chests to be taken from them, well knowing the use to which it was to be put. Lastly, they received the proceeds of the robbery, they saw portions thereof carried away, and they concealed and appropriated the greater part thereof.

"Pannier, the former treasurer of the rebels, provided Dame Bryond with a place of concealment; he is one of the most dangerous participants in this crime; he was privy to it from the beginning. With him begin new ramifications, which are still involved in obscurity, but which the eye of the law will keep watch upon. He is the trusted confidant of Rifoël, the depository of the secrets of the counter-revolutionary faction in the West; he regretted that Rifoël admitted women to the plot and placed confidence in them; he received some of the stolen money and he sent various sums to Rifoël.

"As for the conduct of the two gendarmes, Ratel and Mallet, it calls for the utmost rigor of the law: they were false to their duty. One of them, anticipating his fate, committed suicide, but only after making disclosures of great importance. The other, Mallet, denied nothing; his admissions put an end to all uncertainty.

"Dame Lechantre, notwithstanding her persistent denials, was privy to the whole plot. The hypocrisy of this woman, who tries to shelter her pretended innocence behind the shibboleth of false piety, has a history which proves her resolution and intrepidity in emergencies. She alleges that she was deceived

by her daughter, that she believed the funds in question to belong to Sieur Bryond. A vulgar ruse! If Sieur Bryond had had money he would not have left the province to avoid being a witness of his own shame. Dame Lechantre's mind was set at rest as to the disgrace of resorting to robbery, when she found that it was approved by her confederate Boislaurier. But how does she explain Rifoël's presence at Saint-Savin, his relations and his expeditions with her daughter, and the sojourn of the brigands at Saint-Savin, waited upon by the Godard girl and Dame Bryond? She pleads heavy slumber, she takes refuge in an alleged habit of going to bed at seven o'clock, and she knows not what reply to make when the examining magistrate calls her attention to the fact that she rose at dawn, and that at dawn she must have noticed some traces of the conspiracy and of the visit of so many people, and that she would naturally have been disturbed by the nocturnal going and coming of her daughter. Thereupon she observes that she was praying. The woman is a model of hypocrisy. But her journey on the day of the crime, her solicitude to take her daughter to Mortagne, her journey with the money, her precipitate flight when everything was discovered, the pains that she takes to conceal herself, the very circumstances of her arrest—all tend to establish her complicity from the beginning. She does not act like a mother who wishes to advise her daughter and rescue her from her danger, but like a trembling accomplice; and her complicity is not

the rash impulse of maternal affection, but the fruit of party spirit, the inspiration of her well-known hatred of His Royal and Imperial Majesty's government. But even ill-advised maternal affection would not excuse her; and we must not forget that early, deliberate assent to the plot is the most convincing evidence of complicity.

"The details of the crime as well as its artisans are laid bare. We see the ghastly assemblage of the fanatics of faction lured by the bait of rapine, murder counseled by party spirit, under whose ægis they strive to justify the basest excesses to their own consciences. The voice of the leaders gives the signal for the plunder of the public funds to pay for future crimes; base, evil-minded hirelings commit the robbery for a small fee and do not recoil at assassination; and fomenters of rebellion, no less guilty, assist in the division and concealment of the booty. What society would tolerate such hateful crimes? The law provides no penalty severe enough to punish them.

"Wherefore the special criminal court will be called upon to determine whether the said Herbomez, Hiley, Cibot, Grenier, Horeau, Cabot, Minard, Mélin, Binet, Laravinière, Rousseau, Dame Bryond, Léveillé, Dame Bourget, Vauthier, Chaussard the elder, Pannier, Widow Lechantre, Mallet,—all the above-named defendants being in custody,—and the said Boislaurier, Dubut, Courceuil, Bruce, Chaussard the younger, Chargegrain, Demoiselle Godard—these last being absent and fugitives from

justice—are guilty or not guilty of the acts set forth in this indictment.

"Done at Caen, in the office of the prosecuting attorney, this 1st day of December, 180–.

"Signed, BARON BOURLAC."

*

This legal document, much briefer and more imperative than the indictments of to-day, which set forth so fully and in such minute detail the most trivial circumstances and especially the previous criminal record of the defendant, made a profound impression upon Godefroid. The dry style of the document, wherein the official pen had noted down in red ink the principal details of the affair, set his imagination at work. Condensed, concise narratives are to certain minds texts into which they plunge and investigate their mysterious depths.

In the middle of the night, assisted by the silence and the darkness, and by the terrible connection between that document and Madame de la Chanterie, which the excellent Alain had led him to suspect, Godefroid exerted all the forces of his intelligence to work out the appalling problem.

Evidently the name Lechantre was the family name of the La Chanteries, who had doubtless been shorn of their aristocratic suffix under the Republic and the Empire.

He formed a mental picture of the region where the drama had been enacted. The faces of the secondary conspirators passed before his eyes. He drew an imaginary sketch, not of Rifoël, but of a Chevalier du Vissard, a young man resembling Sir Walter Scott's Fergus, the French Jacobite, in a

word. He worked out the theme of the romantic passion of a young woman grossly betrayed by the infamous conduct of a husband—a type of romance then much in vogue—loving a young chieftain in rebellion against the Emperor, and plunging headlong into a conspiracy, like Diana Vernon; losing her head and unable to stop when she was once fairly started upon that perilous incline! Had she gone on as far as the scaffold?

Godefroid saw as in a vision the whole band of conspirators. He wandered among the Norman copses, he saw the Breton chevalier and Madame Bryond in the fields; he lived at the old château of Saint-Savin; he was present at the various scenes at which they were all won over; he imagined the features of the notary, the tradesman and all the bold Chouan leaders. He readily divined the almost universal concurrence of a region which still kept alive the memory of the expeditions of the famous Marche-à-Terre, of the Comtes de Bauvan and De Longuy, of the massacre of La Vivetière and of the death of the Marquis de Montauran whose exploits had already been narrated to him by Madame de la Chanterie.

This species of vision of men and things and places passed very swiftly. Reflecting that he still had much to learn concerning the imposing, noble, devout old lady whose virtues exercised so great an influence over him as to transform him, Godefroid, with a thrill of terror seized the second document given him by Alain, which was entitled:

"*Brief in behalf of Madame Henriette Bryond des Tours-Minières, born Lechantre de la Chanterie.*"

"That settles it!" said Godefroid to himself.

The tenor of the document was as follows:

"We are convicted and we are guilty; but if a case can be made for the exercise of the right of pardon by the sovereign, do not the circumstances of this case make it such an one?

"It is the case of a young woman, who has declared that she is about to become a mother, and who is condemned to death.

"Upon the threshold of a prison, in presence of the scaffold that awaits her, that woman will tell the truth.

"The truth will plead for her, to it she will owe her pardon.

"In the indictment tried by the criminal court at Alençon, there were, as there are in all indictments against a large number of defendants jointly accused of complicity in a conspiracy based upon the spirit of faction, some portions involved in serious obscurity.

"His Royal and Imperial Majesty's chancery office is to-day in possession of the facts concerning the mysterious personage known as *Le Marchand*, whose presence in the Department of the Orne during the trial was not denied by the prosecuting authorities, but whom it was not deemed advisable to include in the indictment, and whom the defense was able neither to find, nor to produce in court if found.

"That personage is, as the prosecuting attorney, the prefecture, the Paris police and His Royal and Imperial Majesty's chancery office well know, Sieur Bernard-Polydor Bryond des Tours-Minières, a correspondent since 1794 of the Comte de Lille,* known in foreign countries by the name of Baron des Tours-Minières, and in the records of the Parisian police by the name of Contenson.

"He is a man of exceptional character, a man whose youth and noble birth have been dishonored by such all-absorbing vices, by such profound immorality, by such foul crimes, that his infamous life would certainly have ended on the scaffold, save for the cunning with which he was able to make himself useful in his double rôle, implied by his double name. But, being dominated more and more by his passions, by his growing needs, he will end by falling lower than infamy, and will serve in the lowest ranks, despite his incontestable talents and a mind of remarkable power.

"When the Comte de Lille in his wisdom refused to allow Bryond to handle any more of the funds furnished by foreign powers, he determined to leave the blood-stained arena to which his necessities had driven him.

"Was that career no longer fruitful enough? Was it remorse or shame that impelled this man to return to the province where his property, laden with debt even before his departure, was likely to furnish small resources for the development of his genius?

* Afterwards Louis XVIII.

It is impossible to believe it. A more probable supposition is that he had a mission to fulfill in those departments, where some embers of our civil discords were still smoldering.

"While he was looking over the province in which his treacherous co-operation in the intrigues of England and the Comte de Lille procured for him the confidence of those families which belonged to the party conquered by the genius of our immortal Emperor, he fell in with one of the former rebel leaders, with whom, at the time of the Quiberon expedition and of the last uprising of the rebels in the year VII., he had had some intercourse as an envoy from the foreigner. He encouraged the hopes of that great agitator, who has suffered the supreme penalty for his plots against the State. Thus Bryond was enabled to discover the secrets of that irrepressible party, which fails to appreciate the glory of His Majesty the Emperor Napoléon I, and the true interests of the realm, which are united in his sacred person.

"At the age of thirty-five, professing the most sincere piety, boundless devotion to the interests of the Comte de Lille and veneration for the insurgents who met their death in the strife in the West, disguising adroitly the indications of the excesses that had wasted his youth, which still provided him with some external attractions, and efficiently protected by the silence of his creditors and by the most extraordinary complaisance on the part of all the *ci-devants* of the province, that man, a veritable

whited sepulchre, was introduced, with all those claims to consideration, to Dame Lechantre, who was believed to be very wealthy.

"The design was to marry Mademoiselle Henriette, Madame Lechantre's only daughter, to this protégé of *ci-devants*.

"Priests, ex-nobles, creditors, each in a different interest, praiseworthy in some, avaricious in others, blind in the great majority,—all conspired to bring about the union of Bernard Bryond and Henriette Lechantre.

"The good sense of the notary who had charge of Madame Lechantre's affairs, and perhaps some little distrust, were the cause of the young woman's ruin. Sieur Chesnel, notary at Alençon, provided in the contract that the estate of Saint-Savin, the future bride's only property, should be held under the dotal régime,* the dwelling-house and a modest income being settled upon the mother.

"The creditors, who supposed that Madame Lechantre, because of her methodical and economical mode of life, possessed considerable capital, were deceived in their hopes; and all of them, convinced of that lady's avarice, instituted proceedings which disclosed Bryond's precarious plight.

"Grave differences thereupon arose between the newly-made husband and wife, and they resulted in revealing to the young woman the depraved

* That is to say, the contract provided for preserving the wife's dowry intact; a common provision for this purpose was that the dotal property should be inalienable.

morals, the religious and political atheism, and—shall I use the word?—the infamy of the man with whose destiny hers was so unhappily united. Bryond, compelled to admit his wife to the secret of the hateful plots woven against the imperial government, offered Rifoël du Vissard shelter in his house.

"The character of Rifoël, adventurous, fearless, generous, exerted over all who came in contact with him a fascination of which proofs abound in the records of the criminal trials before three special criminal tribunals.

"The irresistible influence, the absolute dominion which he acquired over a young woman who found herself at the bottom of an abyss, is only too evident from the catastrophe whose horrible sequel causes her to kneel a suppliant at the foot of the throne. But a fact that His Royal and Imperial Majesty's chancery can readily cause to be verified is the base complaisance of Bryond, who, far from fulfilling his duty as guide and counselor of the child whom a poor deceived mother had entrusted to him, took delight in drawing tighter the knots of the intimacy between young Henriette and the rebel leader.

"This was the plan of that execrable individual, who glories in his contempt for all things, in his utter disregard of every object save the gratification of his passions, and who looks upon the sentiments dictated by civil and religious morality alike as mere vulgar obstacles.

"This is the proper place to note how familiar

such a scheme must be to a man who, since 1794, has been playing a double rôle, and who, for eight years past, has succeeded in deceiving the Comte de Lille and his partisans, and it may be in deceiving the general police of the Empire as well: do not such men belong to him who pays them the highest price?

"Bryond spurred Rifoël on to the crime; he insisted upon attacks with force and arms upon the funds of the State and upon levying an extensive contribution upon the purchasers of national property by means of the horrible tortures which caused a thrill of dismay through five departments, and which were a conception of his brain. He demanded that three hundred thousand francs should be turned over to him to discharge the incumbrances upon his property.

"In the event of resistance on the part of his wife or Rifoël, he proposed to avenge himself for the contempt he inspired in that upright young woman by giving them both over to the rigor of the law as soon as they should have committed any serious crime.

"When he saw that the spirit of party was stronger than his selfish interests in the two beings whom he had bound together, he disappeared and returned to Paris, fortified with full information concerning the position of affairs in the departments of the West.

"The brothers Chaussard and Vauthier were Bryond's correspondents, as is well known to the chancery office.

"Returning secretly and in disguise to the province, as soon as the attack upon the Caen remittance was committed, Bryond, under the name of Le Marchand, entered into a secret correspondence with Monsieur le Préfet and the magistrates. What was the result? Never was a conspiracy of greater extent and participated in by so many persons occupying such widely different positions on the social ladder, more speedily known to the authorities than that whose first overt act was the attack upon the Caen remittance. All the culprits were followed and watched, six days after the commission of the offense, with a perspicacity that indicated the most complete acquaintance with persons and plans. The arrest, trial and execution of Rifoël and his accomplices are proofs of what we say, cited solely for the purpose of demonstrating our certainty; the chancery office, we repeat, is more fully informed than we upon this matter.

"If ever a person condemned to death should appeal to the clemency of the sovereign, is not Henriette Lechantre such a person?

"Drawn on by passion, by ideas of rebellion which she imbibed with her mother's milk, she is certainly unpardonable in the eyes of the law; but, in the eyes of the most magnanimous of emperors, will not the most infamous treachery, the fiercest of all enthusiasms plead her cause?

"Will not the greatest of captains, the immortal genius who pardoned the Prince von Hatzfeld, and who has the power of divining, like God himself,

motives born of the fallibility of the heart, will he not recognize the existence of the power, invincible in youth, which tends to excuse this crime, great as it is?

"Twenty-two heads have already fallen beneath the sword of justice, by virtue of the judgments of three criminal courts; that of a young woman of twenty, a minor, alone remains: will not the Emperor Napoléon the Great permit her to live and repent? Is she not God's share?

"For Henriette Bryond, wife of Bryond des Tours-Minières,

"Her defender,

"BORDIN,

"Solicitor at the Court of First Instance of the Department of the Seine."

That shocking drama disturbed what little sleep Godefroid obtained. He dreamed of capital punishment as imagined by the physician Guillotin from philanthropic motives. Through the scorching vapors of a nightmare, he caught a glimpse of a lovely, impassioned young woman, submitting to the final preparations, drawn through the streets upon a tumbril, ascending the scaffold and crying: *Vive le roi!*

Godefroid was consumed by curiosity. He rose at daybreak, dressed, paced back and forth in his room, and finally glued his face to his window, gazing mechanically at the sky and reconstructing that drama, as a modern author would do, in several

volumes. And still he saw, against that dark background of Chouans, country people, officers of the law, provincial gentlemen, rebel chieftains, advocates and spies, the faces of the mother and daughter stand radiantly forth; the daughter deceiving her mother, the daughter the victim of a monster, the victim of her passion for one of those intrepid men who were at a later period characterized as heroes, and in whom Godefroid's imagination detected a resemblance to the Charettes, the Cadoudals, the giants of that conflict between the republic and the monarchy.

As soon as Godefroid heard Goodman Alain stirring in his room, he went thither; but, after partly opening the door, he returned to his own room. The old man was kneeling before his prie-Dieu, saying his morning prayers. The aspect of that hoary head, bent low in a profoundly devout attitude, reminded Godefroid of his own neglected duties, and he prayed fervently.

"I expected you," said the good man, when Godefroid entered his room quarter of an hour later; "I humored your impatience by rising earlier than usual."

"Madame Henriette?—" inquired Godefroid with evident anxiety.

"Was Madame's daughter," the old man replied, interrupting him. "Madame's name is Lechantre de la Chanterie. Under the Empire, neither titles of nobility nor names added to original family names were recognized. Thus the Baronne des

Tours-Minières was called Dame Bryond; the Marquis d'Esgrignon resumed his name of Carol and became Citizen Carol, later Sieur Carol; the Troisvilles became Sieurs Guibelin."

"But what happened? Did the Emperor pardon her?"

"Alas! no," replied Alain. "The ill-fated little woman died on the scaffold at twenty-one. After reading Bordin's brief, the Emperor said almost these words to his chief judge:

" 'Why declaim against the spy? An agent is no longer a man, he should cease to have feelings; he is a wheel in a machine. Bryond did his duty. If tools of that sort were not what they are, bars of steel and intelligent only in obeying the orders of the power they serve, there would be no government possible. The judgment of the special criminal court must be executed, otherwise my magistrates would have no further confidence in themselves or in me. Furthermore, the common soldiers employed by those people are dead, and they were less culpable than the leaders. Last of all, we must teach the women of the West not to meddle in conspiracies. For the very reason that the defendant is a woman, the law must take its course. No excuse is tenable in the face of the interests of the constituted authorities.'

"Such is the substance of what the chief judge chose to repeat to Bordin of his interview with the Emperor. When he learned that France and Russia were likely to measure swords with each other

before long, that the Emperor would be obliged to go seven hundred leagues away from Paris to attack a boundless, desert country, Bordin understood the real reasons of the Emperor's lack of clemency. To secure tranquillity in the West, which was already overflowing with disaffected conscripts, Napoléon deemed it essential to inspire a feeling of wholesome dread. So the chief judge advised the solicitor to take no further steps in behalf of his clients."

"Of his client?" said Godefroid.

"Madame de la Chanterie was sentenced to twenty-two years' imprisonment," replied Alain. "As she had already been transferred to Bicêtre, near Rouen, to undergo her punishment, there was no occasion to devote any attention to her until they had saved her Henriette, who had become so dear to her since the ghastly trial, that they thought that Madame would not have survived the sentence, had not Bordin promised to obtain a remission of the death penalty. So they deceived the unhappy mother. She saw her daughter after the execution of the others who were condemned by the same judgment, not knowing that the respite was due to a false declaration of pregnancy."

"Ah! I understand it all!" cried Godefroid.

"No, my dear child; there are things that one cannot divine. For a long while Madame believed that her daughter was alive."

"How so?"

"In this way. When Madame des Tours-Minières

learned from Bordin that her appeal for clemency was denied, the sublime little woman had the courage to write a score or more of letters, dated from month to month after the date fixed for her execution, in order to make her mother believe that she was still alive and to describe the suffering caused by an imaginary illness, from its beginning until her death. Those letters covered a space of two years. Thus Madame de la Chanterie was prepared for her daughter's death, but for a death from natural causes: she did not learn that she died on the scaffold until 1814. For two whole years she was confined with the vilest creatures of her own sex, and wore the prison garb; but after the second year, thanks to the persistent representations of the Champignelles and Beauséants, she was given a private room, where she lived like a cloistered nun."

"And the others?"

"Léveillé the notary, Herbomez, Hiley, Cibot, Grenier, Horeau, Cabot, Minard and Mallet were sentenced to death and executed the same day. Pannier, sentenced to twenty years of penal servitude, as were Chaussard and Vauthier, was branded and sent to the galleys; but the Emperor pardoned Chaussard and Vauthier; Mélin, Laravinière and Binet were sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The Bourget woman was sentenced to twenty-two years' imprisonment. Chargegrain and Rousseau were acquitted. The fugitives from justice were tried in their absence and were all sentenced to

death, except the Godard girl, who, as you must have guessed, is no other than our good Manon—"

"Manon!" cried Godefroid in utter amazement.

"Oh! you don't know Manon yet!" rejoined honest Alain. "The devoted creature, who was sentenced to twenty-two years' imprisonment, gave herself up in order to wait upon Madame de la Chanterie in prison. Our dear vicar is the priest from Mortagne who administered the last sacraments to Madame la Baronne des Tours-Minières, who had the courage to escort her to the scaffold, and to whom she gave her last farewell kiss. The sublime and fearless priest had also attended the Chevalier du Vissard on the scaffold. Thus our dear Abbé de Vèze was cognizant of all the secrets of the conspirators."

"I see why his hair has turned white!" said Godefroid.

"Alas!" continued Alain, "he received from Amédée du Vissard a miniature of Madame des Tours-Minières, the only likeness of her in existence; for that reason he became a sacred person in the eyes of Madame de la Chanterie on the day of her honorable return to society."

"How did it happen that she was able to return?" inquired Godefroid in surprise.

"Why, at the return of Louis XVIII. in 1814, Boislaurier, Monsieur de Boisfrelon's younger brother, had orders from the king to incite a rising in the West in 1809, and again in 1812. The family name is Dubut, the Dubut of Caen is their

kinsman. There were three brothers: Dubut de Boisfranc, president of the Court of Aids; Dubut de Boisfrelon, counselor of Parliament, and Dubut-Boislaurier, captain of dragoons. The father gave his sons the names of three different estates, attempting to make of them stepping-stones to patents of nobility, for the grandfather of the Dubuts was a linen-draper. The Dubut of Caen, who succeeded in making his escape, belonged to that branch of the Dubuts which had remained in business, and he hoped, by his devotion to the royal cause, to succeed to the title of Monsieur de Boisfranc. And Louis XVIII. satisfied the ambition of that loyal servitor, who became Grand Provost in 1815, and later procureur-général under the name of Boisfranc; he died first president of a royal court. The Marquis du Vissard, the poor chevalier's elder brother, was created a peer of France and overwhelmed with honors by the king; he was appointed a lieutenant in the Maison Rouge and prefect after the disbandment of the Maison Rouge. Monsieur d'Herbomez's brother was made a count and receiver-general. The unfortunate banker Pannier died of grief at the galleys. Boislaurier died, childless, a lieutenant-general and governor of a royal château. Messieurs de Champignelles, De Beauséant, the Duc de Verneuil and the Keeper of the Seals presented Madame de la Chanterie to the king.

" 'You have suffered bitterly enough in my behalf, Madame la Baronne; you have a just claim to all my favor and all my gratitude,' he said to her.

"'Sire,' she replied, 'Your Majesty has so many sorrows to console that I have no desire to burden you with the weight of an inconsolable sorrow. To live in oblivion, to weep for my daughter and to do good, that is my life. If anything can lighten my suffering, it is the kindness of my king, the pleasure of seeing that Providence has not caused so much devotion to go for naught.'"

"And what did Louis XVIII. do?" asked Godefroid.

"The king ordered the restitution of two hundred thousand francs to Madame de la Chanterie, for the estate of Saint-Savin was sold for taxes," replied the good man. "The pardon granted to Madame la Baronne and her servant expressed the king's regret for the suffering endured in his service, admitting that *the zeal of his servitors had gone somewhat too far in the selection of methods of carrying out their plans;* but, it is a deplorable fact, and one which will seem to you to illustrate a most curious feature in that monarch's character, that he employed Bryond in his secret police throughout his reign."

"Oh! these kings! these kings!" cried Godefroid. "And is the villain still alive?"

"No. The miserable wretch, who had the grace to conceal his name under that of Contenson, died in the latter part of 1829 or early in 1830. While arresting a criminal who tried to escape over the roof of a house, he fell into the street. Louis XVIII. agreed with Napoléon's ideas concerning the police. Madame de la Chanterie is a saint, she prays for

that monster's soul and pays for two masses a year for him. Although she was defended by the father of a great orator and by one of the famous advocates of the time, Madame de la Chanterie, who knew nothing of her daughter's danger until she brought the money to Saint-Savin, and then only because she was told by her kinsman Boislaurier, could never establish her innocence. President du Ronceret and Vice-president Blondet of the court at Alençon tried in vain to save our poor lady; the influence of the counselor from the imperial court who presided at the special criminal session, the famous Mergi,—afterward procureur-général and a fanatical partisan of the altar and the throne, who caused more than one Bonapartist head to fall—his influence over his two colleagues was so great that he succeeded in obtaining the conviction of the poor Baronne de la Chanterie. Messieurs Bourlac and Mergi displayed extraordinary vindictiveness at the trial. The president called the Baronne des Tours-Minières, the Bryond woman, and Madame, the Lechantre woman. The names of all the accused were made to conform to the republican system and almost all of them were distorted. The details of the trial were most extraordinary and I do not remember them all; but I do recall one audacious stroke which will serve to show you what sort of men those Chouans were. The crowd that tried to witness the trial surpassed anything that your imagination can conceive; it filled the corridors and overflowed upon the public square, reminding one

of the crowd on fair days. One day, at the opening of the session and before the arrival of the court, Pille-Miche, the famous Chouan, leaped over the railing into the midst of the audience, worked his way with his elbows, mingled with the crowd and was borne along with the waves of terrified people, *butting like a wild boar*, so Bordin told me. The gendarmes and the keepers rushed after him and he was recaptured on the stairway within a step of the square. That bold stroke led to the doubling of the guard. A picket of gendarmes was ordered to be stationed on the square, for they feared that there might be Chouans in the crowd ready to give aid and shelter to the defendants. Three persons were crushed to death in the crowd as a result of that attempt. Afterwards it was known that Contenson —like my old friend Bordin, I cannot make up my mind to call him Baron des Tours-Minières, nor even Bryond, which is an old and honorable name—it was known, I say, that that villain appropriated and squandered sixty thousand francs of the stolen money; he gave ten thousand to young Chaussard, whom he inveigled into the police, inoculating him with his tastes and his vices; but no one of his accomplices was fortunate. Chaussard was pushed into the sea by Monsieur de Boislaurier, as soon as he learned by a line from Pannier, of the treachery of that knave, whom Contenson had advised to rejoin the fugitive conspirators, in order to spy upon them. Vauthier was killed in Paris, by one of the Chevalier du Vissard's obscure and devoted partisans,

I have no doubt. The younger Chaussard was assassinated in one of the nocturnal broils peculiar to the police; it is probable that Contenson chose to rid himself of his demands or his remorse by *recommending him for prayers*, as the saying is. Madame de la Chanterie invested her money in the public funds and purchased this house, in order to comply with the desire of her uncle, the old counselor De Boisfrelon, who gave her the requisite money for the purchase. This quiet quarter was near the archbishopric, where our dear abbé had a position with the cardinal. That was Madame's principal reason for not refusing to gratify the wishes of the old man, whose fortune, after twenty-five years of revolution, was reduced to six thousand francs a year. Moreover, Madame desired to lead an almost monastic life as a fitting sequel to the horrible misery that had overwhelmed her for twenty-six years. You ought now to be able to appreciate the majesty, the grandeur of this august victim—I venture so to characterize her."

"Yes," replied Godefroid, "the marks of all the blows she has received impart an indefinable touch of grandeur and majesty to her appearance."

"Every wound, every fresh blow has seemed to redouble her patience and resignation," continued Alain; "but, if you knew her as we know her, if you knew how keenly sensitive she is, how restless the inexhaustible tenderness that flows from her heart, you would be afraid to count the tears she has shed, the fervent prayers she has addressed to

God. One must, like her, have known only a brief season of happiness, to be able to resist so many violent shocks! She has a tender heart, a gentle soul enclosed in a body of steel, hardened by privation, by toil, by rigid penance."

"Her life explains the long lives of hermits," said Godefroid.

"On certain days I ask myself what can be the meaning of such a life. Does God reserve these last, cruel trials for those of His creatures who are to sit beside Him on the morrow of their death?" said Goodman Alain, unaware that he was ingenuously expressing Swedenborg's whole doctrine concerning the angels.

"What!" cried Godefroid, "Madame de la Chanterie was compelled to mingle with—"

"Madame was sublime in prison," replied Alain. "In the course of three years she verified the story of the Vicar of Wakefield, for she converted several of the unfortunate women by whom she was surrounded. During her detention, as she observed the morals of her fellow-prisoners, she was seized with that immense pity for the sorrows of the people, which still oppresses her and which makes of her the queen of Parisian charity. In that frightful Bicêtre at Rouen, she conceived the plan to whose execution we have devoted ourselves. It was, as she says, a delightful dream, an angelic inspiration in the midst of hell; she had no idea that she could ever realize it. Here in this house, in 1819, when tranquillity seemed to be re-established

in Paris, she recurred to her dream. Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, later the Dauphiness, the Duchesse de Berri, the archbishop, afterward the chancellor, and some piously-disposed persons liberally provided the first sums that were necessary. This fund was increased by the alienable portions of our revenues, from which each of us draws only what is absolutely necessary for his personal use."

Tears came to Godefroid's eyes.

"We are the loyal instruments of a Christian idea, and we belong body and soul to the work of which Madame de la Chanterie, whom you hear us call Madame so respectfully, is the foundress and the inspiration."

"Ah! I will be with you heart and soul," said Godefroid, holding out his hands to his host.

"Do you understand now that there are some subjects of conversation absolutely forbidden, even by allusion?" continued the old man. "Do you understand the obligations of courtesy which every inmate of this house contracts toward her whom we look upon as a saint? Do you understand the fascination wielded by a woman made sacred by so many misfortunes, who knows so many things, to whom all forms of misfortune have said their last word, who has learned some lesson from every hardship, all whose virtues have had the twofold sanction of the severest tests and constant practice, and whose soul is without stain, without reproach; who has known only the sorrows of maternity, only the bitterness of conjugal love; upon whom

life smiled only for a few short months, for whom, doubtless, heaven has in store some reward for the gentle resignation she has exhibited under such a burden of grief? Is she not superior to Job in that she has never murmured? Are you surprised now to find her words so weighty, her old age so youthful, her soul so communicative, her glance so persuasive? She has acquired an enormous power over the woes of others, for she has known woe in every conceivable form. All suffering holds its peace in her presence."

"She is a living image of charity!" cried Godefroid enthusiastically. "Shall I be one of you?"

"You must submit to the tests, and, before all things, HAVE FAITH!" exclaimed the old man gently. "So long as you have not faith, so long as you have not absorbed in your heart and your mind the divine meaning of the Epistle of St. Paul concerning charity, you cannot take part in our work."

Paris, 1843–1845.

SECOND EPISODE

THE NOVICE

THE NOVICE

*

The sublimely good is contagious no less than the bad. So it was that, when Madame de la Chanterie's lodger had lived a few months in that venerable, silent house, after Goodman Alain's last confidential disclosures, which inspired in him the most profound respect for the quasi-monks among whom his lot was cast, he felt that well-being of the soul which is due to a regular life, orderly habits and harmony in the characters of those about us. In four months, Godefroid, who had not in all that time heard an angry exclamation or a dispute, confessed to himself that he could not remember that he had been so absolutely at peace, if not precisely happy, since he had been old enough to reason. He judged the world accurately, looking at it from a distance. In due time the desire he had cherished for three months to be admitted to a share in the work of those mysterious persons, became a passion; and any man, even though he be not a great philosopher, can guess how strong the passions become in solitude.

One day therefore,—a day invested with solemnity because of the omnipotence of the mind,—having probed his heart and taken counsel of his strength, Godefroid went upstairs to Goodman Alain, whom

Madame de la Chanterie called her *lamb*, and who seemed to him to be the least imposing, the most approachable of all his fellow-boarders, with the purpose of obtaining from him some information as to the conditions of admission to the priesthood which he and his brethren in God, if we may call them so, exercised in Paris. The allusions already made to a period of trial seemed to point to some form of initiation, for which he was waiting. His curiosity had not been satisfied by what the venerable old man had told him concerning the reasons of his admission to a share in Madame de la Chanterie's work, and he wished to know more about it.

For the third time, Godefroid found himself in Goodman Alain's presence at half-past ten at night, just as the old man was about to read his chapter of the *Imitation*. That time the gentle-souled apostle could not refrain from smiling when he saw the young man, and he said to him, without giving him an opportunity to speak:

"Why do you apply to me, my dear boy, instead of applying to Madame? I am the most ignorant, the least clever, the most imperfect member of the household.—These last three days Madame and all my friends have been reading your heart," he added with a sly expression.

"And what have they found there?" queried Godefroid.

"Ah!" replied the old man without attempting to evade the question, "they have detected in you a

sincere longing to belong to our little flock. But that sentiment has not as yet become a thoroughly earnest vocation in you. Yes," he continued hastily, in response to a gesture from Godefroid, "your curiosity exceeds your fervor. In short, you have not so entirely cut loose from your former ideas that you have not fancied that there might be something adventurous, romantic, as they say, in the incidents of our life."

Godefroid could not help blushing.

"You fancy that there is a similarity between our occupations and those of the caliphs in the *Thousand and One Nights*, and you experience, in anticipation, a sort of satisfaction in playing the part of a good genius in the romantic tales of benevolence which you amuse yourself by inventing!—Ah! my son, your confused smile proves that we have made no mistake. How do you suppose that you can conceal a feeling from people whose profession it is to divine the most secret impulses of the mind, the wiles of poverty, the scheming of want, and who are in reality honorable spies, doing the good Lord's police duty, judges of long experience, whose code contains only absolution, doctors for all varieties of disease, whose only remedy is money judiciously employed? But, you see, my child, we make no quarrel with the motives which bring us a neophyte, provided that he remains with us and becomes a brother in our order. We will judge you at work. There are two sorts of curiosity, curiosity concerning good and concerning evil; at this moment you

have the former. If you are to be a laborer in our vineyard, the juice of the grapes will make you constantly hunger for the divine fruit. The initiation is, as in all natural science, easy in appearance, hard in reality. It is with charity as with poetry. Nothing is easier than to acquire the appearance of it. But here, as on Parnassus, we are content with nothing short of perfection. To become one of us, you must obtain an extended knowledge of life, and of such life, great God! of Parisian life, which defies the craft of Monsieur le Préfet de Police and his associates. Have we not to defeat the permanent conspiracy of evil, to follow it through all its forms, which change so frequently that you would believe there was no end to them? Charity, in Paris, must be as knowing as vice, just as the police agent must be as crafty as the thief. Each one of us has to be straightforward and suspicious, to have a judgment as unerring and swift as the glance. So it is, my child, that we are all old, aged beyond our years; but we are so well satisfied with the results we have obtained that we do not wish to die and leave no successors; and you are the dearer to us all because you will be, if you persevere, our first pupil. In our view there is no such thing as chance, we are indebted to God for you! Yours is an excellent nature, soured by misfortune; and since you have lived here the leaven of evil has lost some of its strength. Madame's divine nature has had its effect on you. Yesterday we held a council; and, as I have your confidence, my good brethren have

decided to give you myself as teacher and guide. Are you content?"

"Ah! my dear Monsieur Alain, with your eloquence you have awakened a—"

"It is not I who am eloquent, my child, but the circumstances under which I speak. One is always sure of being great when obeying God and imitating Jesus Christ, in so far as man can with the assistance of faith."

"This moment has decided my future," cried Godefroid; "I feel all the ardor of a neophyte! I too am determined to pass my life in doing good."

"That is the secret of remaining in the peace of God," replied the good man. "Have you studied the motto: *Transire benefaciendo?* It means, to go from this world leaving a long train of benefactions behind you."

"I understand, and I have myself hung the motto of the order opposite my bed."

"That was well done. That action, so trivial in itself, is of much importance in my eyes! Well, my child, I have your first case already, your first duel with misery, and I am going to put your foot in the stirrup.—We are about to part.—Yes, I myself am detailed to leave the convent and take up my abode in the heart of a volcano. I am about to become superintendent of a large factory where all the workmen are infected with communistic doctrines and dream of overthrowing society and murdering their masters, having no idea that that would mean the death of commerce, manufacturing and factories.

—I shall remain there, who can say how long? perhaps a year, acting as cashier and book-keeper, and finding my way into a hundred or a hundred and twenty households of poor wretches, who were led astray by want doubtless before they began to read bad books. However, we shall meet every Sunday and every holiday. As we shall live in the same quarter, I suggest the church of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas as a rendezvous: I shall attend mass there every day at half-past seven in the morning. If you meet me elsewhere, you will never recognize me unless you see me rubbing my hands like a man in a contented frame of mind. That is one of our signals. Like deaf-mutes, we have a sign language, the necessity of which will be speedily and most convincingly demonstrated to you."

Godefroid made a gesture which the good man understood, for he smiled and at once continued:

"Now, this is your affair. We do not practice the kind of benevolence and philanthropy with which you are familiar, divided into several departments managed for their own benefit by honest sharpers, like so many business enterprises; but we practice charity as it is defined by our great and sublime St. Paul; for we believe, my child, that charity alone can heal the sores of Paris. And so, misfortune, want, suffering, grief, disease, from whatever cause they proceed, in whatever class of society they manifest themselves, have the same rights in our eyes. Whatever his belief or his opinions, an unfortunate is, first of all, an unfortunate;

and we do not seek to turn his face toward our holy mother Church until we have saved him from despair or starvation. And even then we seek to convert him rather by example and by gentleness than otherwise; for we believe that God assists us therein. Any sort of constraint therefore is ill-advised. Of all forms of misery in Paris, the most difficult to discover and the bitterest is the misery of honest people, of the higher class of bourgeois, whose families have become impoverished, for they make it a point of honor to conceal it. Such cases, my dear Godefroid, are the objects of our special solicitude. Indeed, the persons we assist possess intelligence and heart, they repay with interest the sums we have lent them; and those repayments cover the losses we incur with the helpless, the knaves, and those whom misfortune has made stupid. Sometimes we obtain information from our own debtors; but our work has become so extensive, the details are so multitudinous, that we are no longer able to attend to everything. So for seven or eight months we have had a physician in our employ in each arrondissement of Paris. Each of us has charge of four arrondissements. We pay each physician three thousand francs a year to look after our poor. We have the first claim on his time and his services, but we do not forbid his attending other patients. Would you believe that we were not able to find the twelve men that we needed, twelve worthy men, in eight months, notwithstanding the resources afforded by our friends and by our

own extended acquaintance! Of course we must have persons of absolute discretion, of pure morals, of tried skill, energetic and fond of doing good, must we not? Well, although there are in Paris ten thousand men more or less adapted to our needs, we did not fall in with the twelve elect for nearly a year."

"Our Saviour had difficulty in collecting His apostles, and even then a traitor and an unbeliever wormed himself in among them!" said Godefroid.

"However, within a fortnight our arrondissements have all been provided with visitors," continued the good man with a smile; "that is the name we give to our physicians; likewise, within a fortnight, we have had an increased number of applications; but we redouble our activity.—My reason for confiding to you this secret of our rapidly growing order is that you will have to know the physician of the arrondissement to which you are going, especially as your information will come from him. His name is Berton, Doctor Berton, and he lives on Rue d'Enfer. Now, this is the case. Doctor Berton is attending a woman whose disease defies science, so to speak. That does not concern us, but the medical profession; our business is to discover the truth as to the destitute condition of that sick woman's family, which the doctor suspects to be most horrible, but which is concealed with a determination and pride that require us to exert our best efforts. Formerly, I should have been equal to the task, my child; but to-day the work to which my life is

devoted requires an assistant for my four arrondissements, and you are to be that assistant. Our family lives on Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, in a house looking on Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse. You must find a room to let in that house, and try to find out the truth while you live there. Be economical to the point of sordid avarice so far as your own expenses are concerned, but do not disturb yourself about the money to be given away: I will hand you such sums as we deem necessary between ourselves, after a thorough investigation of the circumstances. But study carefully the moral qualities of the unfortunate creatures. Nobility of feeling, an upright heart—those are our pledges! Misers toward ourselves, generous to the suffering, we are bound to be prudent and even to calculate very closely, for we are drawing on the treasure of the poor. So to-morrow morning go and reflect upon the great power placed in your hands. The brethren are with you!"

"Ah!" cried Godefroid, "you give me such pleasure in the thought of doing good and of being worthy to belong to you some day, that I really shall not be able to sleep."

"By the way, my child, one last injunction! The order not to recognize me without the signal applies equally to the other gentlemen, to Madame, and even to the servants in the house. It is a necessary part of the absolute *incognito* which is essential in our undertakings, and we are so often obliged to resort to it that we have made it a law. Furthermore

we desire to remain unknown, lost to sight, in Paris. Remember also, dear Godefroid, the guiding principle of our order, which is never to appear as benefactors, but to assume an obscure rôle, that of intermediaries. We always represent ourselves as the agents of a devout, saintly person—are we not working for God?—so that nobody may feel obliged to be grateful to us or take us for people of wealth. True, sincere humility, not the false humility of those who efface themselves in order to be forced into the light, should inspire your actions and govern all your thoughts. You may well be content with success; but, so long as you are conscious of a feeling of vanity or pride, you will not be worthy to enter the order. We have known two perfect men: one, who was one of our founders, the magistrate Popinot; as for the other, who revealed himself by his works, he was a country physician who has left his name written in a country district. He, my dear Godefroid, was one of the greatest men of our time; he converted a whole canton from irreligion to Catholicism, from the wild state to prosperity, from barbarism to civilization. The names of those two men are engraved in our hearts, and we keep them before our minds as models. We should be very happy if we could exert some day in Paris the influence that that country doctor exerted in his canton. But here the sore is of vast extent and beyond our strength at the present time. May God spare Madame to us for a long time to come, may He send us a few such assistants as

you, and then perhaps we shall leave behind us an institution that will cause His holy religion to be blessed! Well, adieu.—Your initiation is beginning. I chatter away like a professor, and I am forgetting the most important thing: see, here is the address of the family," he said, handing Godefroid a slip of paper; "I have added the number of the house where Monsieur Berton lives on Rue d'Enfer. Now go, and pray God to assist you."

Godefroid took the excellent old man's hands and pressed them warmly, as he bade him good-night and promised to observe all his injunctions.

"Everything that you have said to me," he added, "is engraved in my memory for my whole life."

The old man smiled, saying nothing to imply any incredulity, and rose to go and kneel before his prie-Dieu. Godefroid returned to his room, overjoyed to have a share at last in the mysteries of that household and to have an occupation which, in his then frame of mind, was a pleasure.

The next morning, at breakfast, good Alain was missing, but Godefroid made no allusion to the cause of his absence; nor was he questioned concerning the mission the old man had entrusted to him; thus he received his first lesson in discretion. After breakfast, however, he took Madame de la Chanterie aside and told her that he should be absent for some days.

"It is well, my child," replied Madame de la Chanterie. "Try to do honor to your sponsor,

for Monsieur Alain has answered for you to his brethren."

Godefroid said adieu to the other three brethren, who returned his salutation affectionately, seeming thereby to ask a blessing on his first step in that difficult career.

Association, which is one of the greatest of social forces and which made the Europe of the Middle Ages, rests upon sentiments which, since 1792, have not existed in France, where the individual has triumphed over the State. Association demands, first of all, a devoted nature which is not understood in France; in the second place, an unquestioning faith which is contrary to the spirit of the nation; and lastly a rigid discipline, against which everybody rebels and which the Catholic religion alone can enforce. As soon as an association is formed in our country, each member, upon returning home from a meeting at which the noblest sentiments have been expressed, thinks about making free use of that collective devotion, of that assemblage of forces, and he exerts his ingenuity to find ways of milking the common cow for his own benefit; and the poor beast, unable to meet the demands of so much individual cunning, dies of exhaustion.

No one knows how many generous sentiments have been withered, how many flourishing seeds have perished, how many energetic intellects have been shattered, lost to the country, by the infamous deceptions of the French *Charbonnerie*,* by the

* A political society formed in France under the Restoration.

patriotic subscriptions to the *Champ d'Asile,** and other political frauds, which were represented to be great and noble dramas and which proved to be nothing more than police court vaudevilles. It was the same with industrial associations as with political associations. Love of self was substituted for love of the association. The corporations and merchant guilds of the Middle Ages, to which we shall at some time return, are impossible as yet; so that the only SOCIETIES which still exist are the religious institutions, upon which fierce war is being waged at this moment; for it is the natural tendency of a patient to attack the medicine and often the doctor. France knows nothing of self-abnegation. So it is that no association can live except by virtue of the sentiment of religion, the only sentiment that subdues rebellions of the mind, the scheming of ambition, and greed of every sort. Seekers after new worlds do not know that association has worlds to give away.

As he walked through the streets Godefroid felt like an entirely different man. One who could have read his thoughts would have marveled at the curious result of according to him a share in a collective power. He was no longer a mere man, but an individual of tenfold importance, conscious of being the representative of five persons whose combined powers would uphold his actions, and who were

* A fraudulent scheme for founding a colony in Texas, in connection with the old Napoleonic troops who were unreconciled to the Restoration. See the experiences of Philippe Bridau in *La Rabouilleuse.*

present wherever he was. Carrying their authority in his heart, he was conscious of a fullness of life, a noble power which aroused his best qualities. It was, as he said later, one of the proudest moments of his life; for he enjoyed a new sense, the sense of an omnipotence more certain than a despot's. Moral power is like thought, it has no limits.

"To live for others," he said to himself, "to act in common like a single man, and to act by one's self like all together! to have for one's leader Charity, the fairest, the most life-like of the ideal figures we have made of the Catholic virtues, that is living indeed! But I must repress this childish delight at which Père Alain would laugh. Is it not strange, however, after all, that I should have found the power I have so earnestly desired for so long a time, when my only idea was to efface myself? The world of the unfortunate belongs to me henceforth!"

He walked from Notre-Dame Cloister to Avenue de l'Observatoire in such a state of exaltation that he did not notice the length of the walk.

When he reached Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, at a point near its junction with Rue de l'Ouest, he was surprised to find such quagmires in such a fine location, for neither of the streets named was paved at that time. One must walk along the vacant lots on boards bordering boggy gardens, or in front of the houses on narrow paths, on which pools of stagnant water soon encroached and transformed them into brooks.

After a long search he succeeded in finding the house to which he was directed, and entered it not without difficulty. It was evidently an abandoned factory. The front of the building, which was quite narrow, presented the appearance of a high wall pierced by windows, and without any sort of decoration; but there were none of those square openings on the ground floor, where naught could be seen but a dilapidated low door.

Godefroid concluded that the proprietor had arranged small suites of rooms in the building in order to turn it to some use, for there was a placard over the door, bearing these written words: *Several rooms to let.* He rang, but no one answered the bell; as he was waiting, a passer-by called his attention to the fact that there was another entrance on the boulevard, where he would find somebody to whom he could apply.

Godefroid followed the suggestion and discovered, at the end of a small garden which skirted the boulevard, the real front of the building, partially concealed by trees. The garden, which was very ill-kept, sloped considerably, for there is a considerable difference in grade between Rue Notre-Dame des Champs and the boulevard, the result being that the little garden was a sort of ditch. Godefroid stepped down into a narrow hall, at the end of which he saw an old woman whose dilapidated garments were in perfect harmony with the house.

"Was it you that rang on Rue Notre-Dame?" she asked.

"Yes, madame. Are you the person who shows the rooms?"

Upon receiving an affirmative reply from that concierge of uncertain age, Godefroid inquired whether the tenants were people of quiet habits; he said that his occupation was one that demanded silence and tranquillity; he was a bachelor and desired to arrange with the concierge to do his housekeeping.

At that hint she assumed a gracious expression and said:

"Monsieur is very lucky to come here; for, except on fête-days at the *Chaumière* the boulevard is as deserted as the Pontine marshes."

"Do you know the Pontine marshes?" said Godefroid.

"No, monsieur; but I have an old gentleman upstairs, whose daughter's state brings her at the point of death, and who says that; I just repeat what he says. The poor old man will be very glad to know that monsieur likes and desires rest; for a tenant who was a General Tempest would hasten his daughter's death. On the second floor we have two author fellows; but they come home at midnight and go out at eight o'clock in the morning. They say they're authors; but I don't know where or when they work."

As she spoke, the concierge led Godefroid up a horrible staircase of brick and wood, so ill-joined, that one cannot say whether the wood was seeking to part company with the bricks or whether the bricks were tired of being held in bondage by the

wood; the two materials protected themselves against each other by a supply of dust in summer and of mud in winter. The walls, of cracked plastering, displayed more inscriptions than the Academy of Belles-Lettres ever invented. The concierge paused on the first landing.

"Here, monsieur, are two very nice adjoining rooms that open on Monsieur Bernard's landing. He's the old gentleman I spoke of, a very *comme il faut* sort of man. He has a decoration, but he's been unfortunate apparently, for he never wears it. At first they had a manservant from the provinces, and they dismissed him three years ago. Since then the lady's young son has done everything: he does the housekeeping—"

Godefroid made a gesture.

"Oh! never you fear," cried the concierge, "they won't say anything to you about it, they never speak to anybody. The gentleman's been here since the Revolution of July, he came in 1831. They're provincials who were ruined by the change of government; they're proud, they're as dumb as fishes. In five years, monsieur, they haven't accepted the slightest service from me, for fear of having to pay for it. A hundred sous at New Year's, that's all I make out of them. Talk to me about authors! I get ten francs a month from *them*, just for telling everybody who comes to see them that they moved out last quarter."

This prattle led Godefroid to hope for an ally in the concierge, who told him, while vaunting the

healthful qualities of the two rooms and the two cabinets, that she was not the concierge, but the landlord's confidential servant, and that she managed the house for him, so to speak.

"You can have perfect confidence in me, monsieur, I promise you! for Madame Vauthier would rather have nothing at all, than take a sou belonging to anybody else!"

Madame Vauthier soon came to terms with Godefroid, who refused to hire the apartment except by the month and furnished. The miserable rooms were let, furnished or unfurnished, to unfortunate students or authors. The furniture was stored in the vast garret, which was of the size of the whole building. But Monsieur Bernard had himself furnished the rooms he occupied.

By encouraging Dame Vauthier to talk, Godefroid discovered that it was her ambition to keep a bourgeois boarding-house; but, in five years, she had not succeeded in recruiting a single boarder from among her tenants. She lived on the ground-floor, on the boulevard, and looked after the house herself, with the assistance of a huge dog, a buxom maid-servant, and a small male domestic who cleaned the boots, did the chamberwork and the errands; they were two impecunious creatures like herself, in harmony with the wretched condition of the house, the poverty of the tenants and the wild and desolate aspect of the garden in front of the house.

They were both children abandoned by their families, to whom the widow Vauthier gave no wages but

their board, and such board! The boy, of whom Godefroid caught a glimpse, wore a ragged jacket for livery, slippers instead of shoes, and outside the house he wore wooden clogs. Unkempt as a sparrow just out of his bath, and with black hands, he measured wood in one of the woodyards on the boulevard after his morning work was done; and, after his day's work, which ended at half-past four in the woodyards, he resumed his domestic occupations. He went to the fountain of the Observatory to fetch the necessary water for the house, which the widow supplied to the tenants, together with little bundles of firewood, sawed and tied up by him.

Népomucène—such was the name of the widow Vauthier's slave—carried his day's wages to his mistress. In summer, the poor outcast became a waiter in the wine-shops at the barrier, on Sundays and Mondays. At such times the widow provided him with suitable clothes.

The stout maid-servant did the cooking under the supervision of the widow Vauthier, whom she assisted in her work the remainder of the time; for the widow had a trade: she made list slippers, which she sold to traveling hawkers.

Godefroid learned all these details in the course of an hour, for the widow took him everywhere, showed him the whole house, and explained the transformation it had undergone. Up to 1828 it had been used as a silk-worm nursery, not so much to make silk as to obtain what is called the egg. Eleven acres planted with mulberry trees on the

plain of Montrouge and three acres on Rue de l'Ouest, on which houses were subsequently built, furnished nourishment for that manufactory of silk-worm's eggs. Just as the widow was informing Godefroid that Monsieur Barbet, who had lent money to an Italian named Fresconi, the promoter of that undertaking, had been unable to recover his money, secured by a mortgage on lands and buildings, except by sale of the three acres which she pointed out to him on the other side of Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, a tall, thin old man, with snow-white hair, appeared at that end of the street which joins Rue de l'Ouest.

"Ah! good! he comes just in time!" cried La Vauthier; "see, there's your neighbor, Monsieur Bernard.—Monsieur Bernard," she said, as soon as the old man was within ear-shot, "you won't be alone any longer, this gentleman has hired the apartment opposite yours."

Monsieur Bernard looked up at Godefroid with a feeling of apprehension easy to detect; he had the air of saying to himself: "The misfortune that I dreaded has happened at last!"

"Monsieur," he said, aloud, "do you expect to remain here?"

"Yes, monsieur," replied Godefroid frankly. "This is not the abode of those who are numbered among the fortunate ones of the earth, and this house is the cheapest place I could find in the quarter. Madame Vauthier does not pretend to furnish lodgings for millionaires.—Adieu, my dear

Madame Vauthier, arrange matters so that I can take possession this evening at six o'clock, I will return promptly at that hour."

Thereupon Godefroid walked away toward Rue de l'Ouest at a slow pace, for the anxiety depicted on the tall old man's face led him to believe that he would seek to come to an understanding with him. In fact, after a moment's hesitation, Monsieur Bernard retraced his steps and walked after Godefroid as if to overtake him.

"The old spy! he'll prevent him from coming back," said Dame Vauthier to herself; "this is the second time he's played me that trick.—But patience! in five days he has to pay his rent, and if he don't come to time, I'll shut the door on him. Monsieur Barbet is a kind of tiger who don't need to be stirred up, and—But I'd like right well to know what he's saying to him. Félicité! Félicité! you vile slut! will you ever come?" cried the woman in a harsh, threatening tone—she had used her mild, flute-like voice in speaking to Godefroid.

The servant, a stout, squinting, red-haired damsel, ran to the spot.

"Keep a sharp eye on everything for a little while, d'ye hear? I'll be back in five minutes."

With that, Dame Vauthier, once cook to Barbet the bookseller, one of the hardest-hearted of petty usurers, glided after her two tenants, so that she could watch them at a distance and be at hand to rejoin Godefroid when the conversation between him and Monsieur Bernard should come to an end.

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Monsieur Bernard walked slowly, like a man whose mind is not made up, or like a debtor trying to invent excuses to give a creditor who has just left him in anger.

Godefroid, although his back was turned to the stranger, looked at him while pretending to examine the neighboring buildings. So it was not until he was in the centre of the broad avenue in the Luxembourg garden that Monsieur Bernard accosted him.

"I beg your pardon, monsieur," he said, raising his hat to Godefroid, who returned the salutation; "a thousand pardons for detaining you when I have not the honor of being known to you; but is your purpose to take up your quarters in the horrible house in which I live, irrevocable?"

"Why, monsieur—"

"Yes," the old man continued, interrupting Godefroid with an authoritative wave of the hand, "I know that you may ask me by what right I interfere in your affairs, by what right I question you. Listen, monsieur, you are young, and I am quite old, older than my years; my age is sixty-seven, and one would say that I was eighty. Gray hairs and misfortune justify many things, as the law exempts septuagenarians from certain public services; but I do not mean to speak to you of the rights of gray hairs, but of your own interests. Do

you know that the quarter in which you propose to live is deserted after eight o'clock in the evening, and that one is exposed to many dangers there, the least of which is robbery? Did you notice those unoccupied spaces, those fields, those gardens?—You may remind me that I live there myself; but, monsieur, I never go out after six o'clock in the evening. You will remind me that there are two young men who lodge on the second floor, over the apartment you propose to take; but, monsieur, those two poor scriveners are the victims of notes of hand, hunted by creditors; they are in hiding, they go out at dawn and return at midnight, having no fear of robbers or assassins; besides, they always go together and are always armed. I myself obtained permission from the prefecture of police for them to carry weapons."

"Oh! monsieur," said Godefroid, "I have no fear of robbers for reasons similar to those that make those gentlemen invulnerable, and I have such contempt for life, that if I should be murdered by mistake I would bless the murderer."

"You haven't the appearance of a very unhappy man, however," rejoined the old man, who had been examining Godefroid with attention.

"I have just enough to live on, to keep myself in bread, and I have come here, monsieur, because of the silence that reigns here. But may I ask you what interest you have in keeping me away from the house?"

The tall old man hesitated to reply; he saw

Madame Vauthier coming; but Godefroid, who was examining him attentively, was surprised at the excessive emaciation to which grief and hunger, it might be, or perhaps hard work had reduced him; there were indications of all those causes of weakness upon his face, where the dry skin clung close to the bones, as if it had been exposed to the fierce heat of Africa. The high, threatening forehead sheltered beneath its dome two steel-blue eyes, cold, stern, sagacious and keen as a savage's, but marred by deep, heavily-wrinkled, black circles. His long, thin, high-arched nose and his raised chin made the old man's face curiously like the well-known, hackneyed mask of Don Quixote; but he was a threatening, awe-inspiring Don Quixote, with no illusions.

Despite this general aspect of severity, the face bore witness to the fear and weakness with which poverty endows all its unfortunate victims. Those two sentiments produced crevices as it were in that solidly constructed face, so solidly constructed that the destructive mattock of want seemed to have dulled itself upon it. The mouth was grave and eloquent. Don Quixote combined with Président de Montesquieu.

He was dressed throughout in black broadcloth, but the broadcloth showed the nap. The coat, of old-fashioned cut, and the trousers, exhibited divers patches of bungling workmanship. The buttons had been renewed. The coat was buttoned to the chin so that the linen could not be seen, and the

rusty black cravat concealed the identity of a false collar. That black suit, worn for many long years, was redolent of poverty. But the mysterious old man's grand manner, his gait, the thought that dwelt upon his brow and manifested itself in his eyes, excluded the idea of pauperism. An observer would have hesitated how to classify that Parisian.

Monsieur Bernard seemed so absorbed in thought that he might have been taken for a professor of the quarter, for a scholar plunged in jealous and despotic meditation; wherefore Godefroid was seized with a keen interest in him and a curiosity which his benevolent mission excited to a high degree.

"Monsieur, if I were sure that you are really in search of silence and retirement, I would say to you: 'Live in my neighborhood,'" said the old man. "Hire that apartment," he continued, raising his voice so as to be heard by Dame Vauthier, who passed at that moment, listening intently. "I am a father, monsieur, and I have nobody on earth but my daughter and her son to assist me to endure the hardships of life; and my daughter requires silence and absolute tranquillity. All those who have hitherto taken the apartment you propose to take have yielded to the arguments and the prayers of a despairing father; it was a matter of indifference to them whether they lived in one street or another of a quarter which is really deserted, and where cheap lodgings are as plentiful as moderate-priced boarding-houses. But I see that your mind is fully made up, and I entreat you, monsieur, do not deceive me; for

in that case I shall be compelled to leave the house and go outside the barrier. In the first place, moving may cost me my daughter's life," he said, in an altered voice; "and then, who knows whether the doctors who attend my daughter now for the love of God will be willing to go beyond the barriers?"

If the man could have wept, his cheeks would have been deluged with tears as he said these last words; but, to use an expression in common use to-day, he had tears in his voice, and he covered his face with his hands, which seemed to be nothing but bone and muscle.

"What is your daughter's disease, pray?" said Godefroid in an insinuating, sympathetic voice.

"A horrible disease, to which the doctors give all sorts of names, or, to speak more truly, which has no name. My fortune has disappeared—"

He checked himself, and said with one of those gestures which belong only to the unfortunate:

"The little money that I had—for I was left without means in 1830, and deprived of an important office—all that I possessed was speedily consumed by my daughter, who had already ruined her mother, monsieur, and her husband's family. To-day my pension is barely sufficient to pay for the things that are absolutely necessary for my poor saint-like daughter in her present condition. She has exhausted my power of weeping. I have undergone a thousand tortures, monsieur; I must be of granite not to have died, or, rather, God

preserves the father for the child, so that she may have a nurse, a Providence, for her mother died of grief.—Ah! young man, you have come at the moment when the old tree that has never bent begins to feel the axe of want, sharpened by grief, attack its heart. And I, who have never uttered a complaint, propose to tell you about this disease, in order to prevent you from coming to the house, or, if you persist, to prove to you the necessity of not disturbing our repose. At this moment, monsieur, my daughter barks like a dog, day and night!"

"Is she mad?" said Godefroid.

"She is perfectly sane," replied the old man, "and she is a saint. You will conclude directly that I am mad, when I have told you all. My only daughter, monsieur, was born of a mother whose health was excellent. In all my life I have loved but one woman and she was my wife. I chose her; I married, for love, the daughter of one of the most gallant colonels in the Garde Impériale, a Pole, formerly an orderly of the Emperor, the brave General Tarlovski. The functions of the office I held demanded great purity of morals; but my heart was not made to furnish lodgings for many sentiments, and I faithfully loved my wife, who well deserved such a love. As a father, I am what I was as a husband, that is the whole truth in a word. My daughter never left her mother, and no child ever lived a more chaste, more Christian life than that dear girl. She was born more than pretty, beautiful; and her husband, a young man of whose

morals I was sure, for he was the son of a friend of mine, the president of one of the royal courts, certainly cannot have contributed in any way to my daughter's malady."

He paused, and he and Godefroid instinctively glanced at each other.

"Marriage, as you know, sometimes changes young people a great deal," continued the old man. "Her first confinement passed off without accident, and she brought forth a son, my grandson, who lives with me now, the only scion of the two families. The second pregnancy was attended by such extraordinary symptoms that all the physicians were astounded and could attribute them only to the curious phenomena which sometimes manifest themselves under those conditions, and which they record in the annals of the science. My daughter gave birth to a dead child, literally deformed and suffocated by interior convulsions. The disease was beginning, but the pregnancy had nothing to do with it.—Perhaps you have studied medicine?"

Godefroid made a gesture which could be interpreted as one of assent or dissent.

"After that terrible, laborious confinement," continued Monsieur Bernard—"a confinement, monsieur, which produced so violent an impression on my son-in-law, that the melancholia supervened, of which the poor boy died—my daughter, after two or three months, complained of a general weakness which affected her feet particularly, so that they seemed to her, as she said, to be made of cotton.

That atony changed to paralysis, but such paralysis, monsieur! You could bend my daughter's feet under her and twist them in every direction, and she did not feel it. The limb existed, but apparently had neither blood nor muscles nor bones. This affection, which has nothing in common with any known disease, extended to the arms and hands, and we thought that it must be some disease of the spinal column. Doctors and medicines simply made her worse, until my poor child could not stir without putting her ribs or her shoulders or her arms out of joint. We had in the house for a long while an excellent surgeon, who spent almost his whole time, in conjunction with the physician or physicians,—for he came to us from curiosity,—replacing her limbs—would you believe it, monsieur?—three or four times a day! Ah! the disease has so many forms, that I forgot to tell you that, during the period of weakness, before her limbs were paralyzed, my daughter had the most extraordinary attacks of catalepsy.—You know what catalepsy is?—For instance she would remain for days at a time, with her eyes open, perfectly motionless in whatever position she was in when the fit seized her. She went through the most shocking phases of that malady and even had attacks of tetanus. That phase of the disease suggested to me the idea of using magnetism as a remedy, when I saw that she was paralyzed in such a strange way. My daughter, monsieur, was gifted with marvelous powers of clairvoyance; her mind has been the stage of all

the marvels of somnambulism, even as her body is the stage of all diseases."

Godefroid began to wonder if the old man were perfectly sane.

"I am a child of the eighteenth century, fed upon Voltaire, Diderot and Helvetius," he continued, paying no heed to the expression of Godefroid's eyes, "I am a son of the Revolution, and I laughed at all the stories of people possessed by devils in ancient times and the Middle Ages; but, monsieur, such possession alone will explain my daughter's condition. Even in her somnambulism she has never been able to tell us the causes of her sufferings; she did not see them, and all the methods of treatment she has dictated to us, although scrupulously followed, have done her no good. For example, she wished to be wrapped in the body of a freshly-killed pig; then she ordered us to stick sharp pieces of iron, heavily magnetized and heated red hot, into her legs; to pour melted sealing-wax all along her backbone. And such horrible things happened to her, monsieur! Her teeth fell out! She became deaf, then dumb; and then, after six months of absolute deafness and dumbness, suddenly the power of speech and hearing came back to her. She recovered the use of her hands spasmodically, as she lost it; but her feet have been useless for seven years. She has exhibited the characteristic symptoms of hydrophobia and has had well-defined attacks of that disease. Not only does the sight or sound of water, the sight of a glass or

cup, make her wild, but she has contracted the habit of barking like a dog, a melancholy bark, howls such as a dog utters when anyone plays the organ. Several times she has been at the point of death and has received the sacraments, and she has returned to life, to suffer in the full possession of her reason, with her mind perfectly clear; for the powers of the mind and heart are still unimpaired. She has lived, monsieur, but she has caused the death of her mother and her husband, who were not able to endure the strain of such paroxysms. Alas! monsieur, what I have told you is nothing! All the natural functions are perverted, and medical science alone can explain the extraordinary aberrations of her organs. And in that condition I was obliged to bring her from the province to Paris, in 1829; for the two or three physicians in Paris to whom I applied, Desplein, Bianchon and Haudry, all believed that I was trying to deceive them. The power of magnetism was in those days very energetically denied by the scientific societies; and, although they did not impugn my good faith and that of the provincial doctors, they imagined that there had been careless observation, or, if you please, exaggeration, which is very common among patients and their families. But they were compelled to change their minds, and the phenomena they observed in my daughter's case are responsible for the recent researches in the matter of nervous diseases, for her extraordinary plight is so classified. The last consultation held by those gentlemen

resulted in the cessation of the use of medicines; they decided that nature must be left to itself and its processes carefully studied. Since then I have had only one physician, the last is the one who attends the poor people in the quarter. He does well enough to ease her pain, to give her momentary relief, which is all we can do, as its cause is not known."

At that point the old man paused, as if oppressed by the burden of those horrifying disclosures.

"For five years," he continued, "my daughter has alternated between periods of slight improvement and constant relapses; but there has been no new development. She suffers more or less from the various forms of nervous attacks which I have briefly described to you; but the affection of the legs and the disorder of the natural functions are constant. Our poverty, which has steadily increased, compelled us to leave the apartment in the Roule quarter, which I hired in 1829; and as my daughter cannot endure being moved, and as I have already nearly lost her twice, bringing her to Paris and moving from the Beaujon quarter here, I hired my present lodgings at once, anticipating the misfortunes which were not slow to burst upon me; for, after thirty years' service, they made me wait until 1833 for the adjustment of my pension. I did not receive a sou until within six months, and the new government had added to its other harsh measures that of granting me only the minimum amount."

Godefroid made a gesture of surprise, which was in effect a request for unreserved confidence, and the old man so understood it, for he at once continued, not without a reproachful glance toward heaven:

"I am one of the innumerable victims of the political reactions. I conceal a name upon which many people would be glad to take revenge, and if the lessons of experience are not always wasted from generation to generation, remember, young man, never to lend a hand in carrying out the harsh measures of any political party. Not that I repent having done my duty, my conscience is perfectly clear, but the ruling powers of to-day have not that solidarity which binds governments together, even though they be widely different in form; and if zeal is rewarded, it is the result of a passing fear. The instrument they have used, however faithful an instrument it may have been, is sooner or later entirely forgotten. You see in me one of the most steadfast supporters of the government of the Bourbons of the elder branch, as I was of the imperial government, and I am destitute! I am too proud to beg, so that no one will ever dream of the untold agony I suffer. Five days ago, monsieur, the physician of the quarter, who is attending my daughter—or observing her case, if you choose—told me that he was powerless to cure a disease, the form of which varied every fortnight. According to him, nervous diseases are the despair of medical science, for their causes must be sought in

unexplorable directions. He advised me to have recourse to a Jew doctor who is reputed to be a quack; but he told me that he was a foreigner, a Polish refugee, that the faculty are very jealous of some extraordinary cures that have caused much talk, and that some people believe him to be very learned and very skilful. But he is exacting and suspicious, he selects his own patients and does not waste his time; and lastly he is—a communist. His name is Halpersohn. My grandson has been to see him twice to no purpose, for we have had no call from him as yet, I understand why!"

"Why?" queried Godefroid.

"Oh! my grandson, who is sixteen years old, is dressed even more shabbily than I am; and, would you believe it, monsieur, I do not dare to call on this doctor: my attire accords too ill with what one would naturally expect in a man of my age, of my gravity of character. If he sees the grandfather so destitute, when the grandson is equally ill-clad, will he give my daughter the necessary attention? He will treat her as they all treat the poor. And consider, my dear monsieur, that I love my daughter for all the pain she has caused me, just as I loved her formerly for all the happiness I owed to her. She has become angelic. Alas! she is no longer aught but a soul, a soul that shines upon her son and upon me: the body no longer exists, for she has conquered pain. Judge what a spectacle for a father! . To my daughter the world is her poor room! she must have flowers, which she loves; she

reads a great deal; and, when she has the use of her hands, she works like a fairy. She knows nothing of the profound destitution in which we are plunged. Thus our life is such an abnormal one that we cannot admit anyone to our apartments. Do you understand me, monsieur? Do you see why a neighbor is an impossibility? I should ask him to do so many things, that I should place myself under too great a burden of obligation, and it would be impossible for me to repay him. In the first place, I have not time for everything: I am educating my grandson, and I work so hard, so hard, monsieur, that I do not sleep more than three or four hours—"

"Monsieur," Godefroid interrupted the old man, whom he had listened to patiently, watching him with sorrowful attention, "I will be your neighbor and I will assist you—"

The old man made a gesture of pride, of impatience even, for he had no belief in the goodness of mankind.

"I will assist you," continued Godefroid, taking the old man's hands and pressing them with respectful warmth, "so far as I can assist you. Tell me. What do you expect to do with your grandson?"

"He is to enter the School of Law soon, for he will follow the legal profession."

"Then your grandson will cost you six hundred francs a year."

The old man said nothing.

"I have nothing myself," said Godefroid after a pause, "but I can do much. I will have the Jew doctor for you, and if your daughter is curable she

shall be cured. We will find a way to pay this Halpersohn."

"Oh! if my daughter should be cured, I would make a sacrifice that I can make but once!" cried the old man. "I would sell what I have retained as a last resource!"

"You will keep it—"

"Oh! youth! youth!" cried the old man, shaking his head. "Adieu, monsieur, or rather au revoir. It is time for the library to open, and, as I have sold all my books, I am obliged to go there every day to work. I am grateful to you for this generous impulse of yours; but we shall see if you will show the consideration I must ask at my neighbor's hands. That is all I expect of you."

"Yes, monsieur, let me be your neighbor; for, you see, Barbet is not the man to leave his rooms unoccupied long, and you might fall in with a worse companion in misfortune than myself. I do not ask you to trust me now, but to allow me to be useful to you."

"In whose interest?" cried the old man, as he prepared to descend the steps of the Chartreux Cloister, which was then the usual passageway from the main avenue of the Luxembourg to Rue d'Enfer."

"Have you never, in the performance of your duties, obliged any person?"

The old man looked at Godefroid with contracted eyebrows, his eyes overflowing with memories, like a man who examines the book of his life, seeking

an action to which he could attribute such rare gratitude, and he turned coldly away, after a parting salutation instinct with doubt.

"Well, for a first interview, he was not very badly frightened," said the novice to himself.

Godefroid at once betook himself to Rue d'Enfer, to the address given him by Monsieur Alain, and found Doctor Berton, a cold, stern man, who surprised him greatly by assuring him of the accuracy of all the details of his daughter's illness given him by Monsieur Bernard; and he obtained Halpersohn's address.

That Polish physician, who subsequently became so famous, was then living at Chaillot, Rue Marbeuf, in a small isolated house, occupying the whole first floor. General Roman Zarnovicki lived on the ground floor and the servants of the two refugees occupied the rooms under the eaves of the diminutive mansion, which had but two floors. Godefroid did not see the doctor; he learned that he had gone some distance into the country at the summons of a wealthy patient; but he was almost glad that he did not find him, for, in his haste, he had forgotten to provide himself with money, and was obliged to return to his room at the Hôtel de la Chanterie to obtain a supply.

These various trips and the time passed at dinner at a restaurant in Rue de l'Odéon brought Godefroid to the hour when he was to take possession of his lodging on Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse. Nothing could be more wretched than the furniture with

which Madame Vauthier had furnished the two rooms. It seemed that the woman must have been accustomed to let lodgings that were not occupied. The bed, chairs, tables, commode, desk and curtains were evidently procured at sales made by authority of law, in cases where the usurer had kept them for some debt, failing to obtain what they were worth—a case of frequent occurrence.

Madame Vauthier stood with her arms akimbo, waiting for thanks; she mistook Godefroid's smile for a smile of pleased surprise.

"Ah! I selected all the finest things we have for you, my dear Monsieur Godefroid," she said with a triumphant air. "There are pretty silk curtains, and a mahogany bed *that isn't eaten by worms!*—it belonged to the Prince de Wissembourg and came from his hotel. When he left Rue Louis-le-Grand in 1809, I was a scullery maid in his house.—From there I entered my landlord's service."

Godefroid checked this flow of confidences by paying his month's rent in advance, and, also in advance, the six francs he was to pay Madame Vauthier for keeping house for him. At that moment he heard a bark, and, if he had not been warned by Monsieur Bernard, he would have believed that his neighbor kept a dog in his room.

"Does that dog yelp at night?"

"Oh! don't be alarmed, monsieur, be patient, you only have this week to suffer. Monsieur Bernard won't be able to pay his rent and he'll be turned out. But they're very curious people, I tell

you! I never saw their dog. The dog was here for months—what do I say? months? yes, six months, without anyone hearing him! You would never have believed they had a dog. The beast never leaves the lady's room. There's a lady there very sick, you know! She's never been out of her room since she first went into it. Old Monsieur Bernard works very hard, and so does her son, who's a day scholar at College Louis-le-Grand, where he's finishing his course in philosophy, at sixteen! He's a young blade, I tell you! but the little rascal works like a madman!—You'll hear them taking out the flowers from the lady's room, for the grandfather and grandson eat nothing but bread, but they buy flowers and dainties for the lady. The lady must be very sick not to have left the house since she came here; and, from what Monsieur Berton says, the doctor who comes to see her, she won't go out till she goes feet foremost."

"What does this Monsieur Bernard do?"

"He's a scholar, it seems; for he writes, he goes to the libraries to work, and monsieur lends him money on what he writes."

"Who is monsieur?"

"My landlord, Monsieur Barbet, who used to be a bookseller; he was in business sixteen years. He's a Norman and used to sell lettuce in the street; he set up in the old-book trade on the quays, in 1818; then he had a little shop and now he's very rich. He's a sort of Jew with thirty-six trades; he

was a partner, as you might say, with the Italian who built this old barrack to lodge silk-worms in."

"So this house is a place of refuge for unfortunate authors, is it?" said Godefroid.

"Is monsieur unlucky enough to be one of 'em?" queried the widow Vauthier.

"I am only a beginner," Godefroid replied.

"Oh! my dear monsieur, for the evil I wish you, stop where you are! Now, as to journalists, I don't say—"

Godefroid could not refrain from laughing as he said good-night to the ex-cook, who unconsciously represented the whole bourgeoisie. As he went to bed in that depressing chamber, with its flooring of red bricks which had not even been painted, and hung with paper at seven sous the roll, Godefroid regretted not only his little apartment on Rue Chanoinesse, but also and more than all else the society of Madame de la Chanterie. He felt a great void in his heart. He had already fallen into new ways of thinking, and he did not remember that he had ever in all his life experienced such keen regret. The comparison, brief as it was, had a tremendous effect upon his mind: he understood that no life could be compared with the life he longed to embrace, and his resolution to rival honest Alain was unassailable. Lacking the vocation, he had the will.

*

The next morning Godefroid, who had become accustomed in his new life to rising very early, saw from his window a young man of some seventeen years, dressed in a blouse, who was returning doubtless from some public fountain, with a jug filled with water in each hand. The face of the young man, who was not aware that he was being watched, gave full expression to his sentiments, and Godefroid had never seen aught so ingenuous, nor aught so sad. The charms of youth were held in check by want, by study and by great physical weariness. Monsieur Bernard's grandson was noticeable by virtue of his extreme pallor, which was heightened by his very dark brown hair. He made three journeys to the fountain; as he returned from the last he saw a load of wood being delivered which Godefroid had ordered the day before, for the late winter of 1838 was beginning to make itself felt and a light snow had fallen during the night.

Népomucène, who had begun his day's work by going after the wood, on which Madame Vauthier had made a large levy in consideration of the service, was talking with the young man, while waiting for the sawer to prepare a bundle for him to take upstairs. It was easy to see that the sudden approach of cold weather was causing Monsieur Bernard's grandson some anxiety, and that the

sight of the wood, as well as the leaden sky, reminded him of the necessity of laying in his own supply. But suddenly, as if he reproached himself for wasting precious time, the young man took up his two jugs and hurried into the house. It was half-past seven o'clock, and when he heard the clock at the Convent of the Visitation strike that hour, he remembered that he must be at the College Louis-le-Grand at half-past eight.

Just as the young man entered the house, Godefroid opened his door to Madame Vauthier, who was bringing hot coals for her new tenant—so that Godefroid witnessed a scene that took place on the landing. A gardener from the neighborhood, after ringing several times at Monsieur Bernard's door without result, for the bell was wrapped in paper, indulged in a coarse dispute with the young man, demanding the money due for the hire of the plants furnished by him. As the creditor raised his voice, Monsieur Bernard appeared.

"Go in and dress yourself, Auguste," he said to his grandson, "it is time for you to go to the college."

He took the two jugs and returned to the first room of his suite, where Godefroid caught a glimpse of plants in jardinières; then he closed the door and returned to speak with the gardener. Godefroid's door was open, for Népomucène had begun his trips and was piling up the wood in the first room. The gardener had held his peace at sight of Monsieur Bernard, who made an imposing appearance in a violet silk dressing-gown buttoned to the chin.

"You can just as well ask for what we owe you without shouting so," said he.

"Be just, my dear monsieur," rejoined the gardener: "you were to pay me every week, and here it is three months, ten weeks, since I received anything, and you owe me a hundred and twenty francs. We are used to letting our plants to rich people who give us our money as soon as we ask for it, and this is the fifth time I've been here. We working people have our rent to pay and I am hardly any better off than you. My wife, who supplied you with milk and eggs, won't come this morning: you owe her thirty francs, and she prefers not to come rather than worry you about the money, for she's a kind-hearted creature, is my wife! If I listened to her, business wouldn't be possible. That's the reason I come, for I can't hear with that ear, you understand?"

At that moment Auguste came out, dressed in a shabby green coat and cotton trousers of the same color, a black cravat and badly worn boots. His clothes, although carefully brushed, betrayed the last degree of destitution, for they were too short and too tight, so that he seemed likely to split them at every movement. The white seams, the shrivelled edges, the torn buttonholes displayed to the least practised eye, despite the neat patches, the ignoble stamp of poverty. That livery of want contrasted strangely with the blooming youth of Auguste, who walked away, munching a piece of stale bread, upon which his fine, strong teeth left

their mark. He breakfasted thus on his way from Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse to Rue Saint-Jacques, holding his books and papers under his arm, his superb dark hair peeping out from beneath his cap, which was too small for his noble head.

As he passed his grandfather he exchanged with him a swift, pitifully sad glance, for he saw that he was confronted by an almost insurmountable difficulty, whose consequences were most deplorable. To make room for the student of philosophy, the gardener stepped back to Godefroid's door; and just as he reached the threshold, Népomucène blocked up the landing with a load of wood, so that the creditor stepped into the room and to the window.

"Monsieur Bernard," cried the widow Vauthier, "do you suppose Monsieur Godefroid hired his rooms for you to receive callers in?"

"Excuse me, madame," said the gardener, "the landing was full—"

"I didn't say that for your benefit, Monsieur Cartier," rejoined the widow.

"Stay here!" cried Godefroid to the gardener.—"And if it is more convenient for you, my dear neighbor," he added, looking at Monsieur Bernard, who seemed entirely insensible to the despicable insult, "to talk with your gardener in this room, come in."

The tall old man, dazed with grief, cast a glance at Godefroid, expressive of untold gratitude.

"And as for you, my dear Madame Vauthier, be less rude to monsieur, in the first place because he's

an old man, and in the second place, because you owe it to him that I am your tenant."

"Nonsense!" cried the widow.

"And then, if people who aren't rich don't help one another, who will help them? Leave us, Madame Vauthier; I will kindle my fire myself. Just have my wood put in your cellar, I think you will take good care of it."

Madame Vauthier disappeared: for Godefroid, by giving her wood to store, had furnished rich pasturage for her avidity.

"Come in here, gentlemen," said Godefroid, making a sign to the gardener and placing two chairs for him and his debtor.

The old man remained standing but the gardener sat down.

"Now, my dear man," continued Godefroid, "the rich people don't pay as regularly as you say, and you ought not to worry a worthy man for a few louis. Monsieur receives his pension every six months, and he can't assign it to you for such a paltry sum; but I will advance the money if you insist upon it."

"Monsieur Bernard received his pension money three weeks ago, and he didn't pay me. I should be sorry to cause him any trouble—"

"Let us see! you have been furnishing him plants since—"

"For six years, monsieur, and he always paid me promptly."

Monsieur Bernard, who was listening intently to

what was taking place in his own room, and not to this discussion, heard shrieks through the partition, and he hurried away in dire alarm, without speaking.

"Come, come, my good man, bring some pretty flowers, your prettiest flowers, to Monsieur Bernard this morning, and let your wife send some fresh eggs and milk; I will pay you to-night, myself."

Cartier looked at Godefroid with a curious expression.

"I suppose you know more about them than Madame Vauthier, who sent word to me to bestir myself if I wanted to be paid," he said. "Neither she nor I, monsieur, can understand why people who live on bread, who pick up bean-pods, and the parings of carrots, turnips and potatoes at restaurant doors,—yes, monsieur, I saw the young fellow with a basket he was filling—why such people should spend nearly a hundred francs a month on flowers. They say that the old man's pension is only three thousand francs."

"At all events," said Godefroid, "it isn't for you to complain because they ruin themselves in flowers."

"Of course not, monsieur, provided I am paid."

"Bring me your bill."

"Very well, monsieur," said the gardener, with a suggestion of respect. "I suppose monsieur wishes to see the lady who is kept hidden?"

"Be quiet, my good friend, you forget yourself!" retorted Godefroid dryly. "Return home, select your finest plants to replace those you are to take

away. If you can supply me with sweet cream and fresh eggs, you shall have my custom, and I will come and look over your place this morning."

"It is one of the finest in Paris, monsieur, and I exhibit at the Luxembourg. My garden, which contains three acres, is on the boulevard, behind the garden of the *Grande Chaumière*."

"Very good, Monsieur Cartier. You are, I should judge, richer than I am. Be considerate to us, for who knows that we shall not need one another's help some day?"

The gardener took his leave, sorely perplexed as to who Godefroid might be.

"And I was like that once!" said Godefroid to himself as he kindled his fire. "What a perfect model of the bourgeois of to-day! gossipy, inquisitive, consumed with the idea of equality, eager for custom, angry because he doesn't know why an invalid stays in her room and does not show herself; anxious to conceal his wealth, and yet vain enough to display it so that he can hold himself above his neighbor. The fellow must be at least a lieutenant in his company. How easily the scene of Monsieur Dimanche is played, at all times! Another moment and I should have made a friend of Sieur Cartier."

The tall old man interrupted Godefroid's soliloquy, which shows how his ideas had changed in four months.

"I beg your pardon, neighbor," said Monsieur Bernard, in a troubled voice, "I see that you have sent the gardener away contented, for he bowed

politely to me. In very truth, young man, Providence seems to have sent you here expressly for our benefit, just at the moment when we were about to succumb. Alas! that man's indiscretion has enabled you to guess many things. It is true that I received my half-yearly pension a fortnight ago, but I had debts more pressing than his, and I had to reserve enough for our rent or else be turned out. You, to whom I have confided my daughter's condition, and who have heard her—"

He looked anxiously at Godefroid, who made a sign of assent.

"Very well, judge for yourself if it would not be a death-blow to her—for I should have to put her in a hospital!—My grandson and I dreaded this morning, but it was not Cartier that we feared most, it was the cold—"

"I have wood, my dear Monsieur Bernard, take some," said Godefroid.

"How can I ever repay such services?" cried the old man.

"By accepting them without ceremony," replied Godefroid eagerly, "and by having full confidence in me."

"But what claim have I to such generous treatment?" asked Monsieur Bernard, distrustful once more. "My pride and my grandson's are crushed!" he cried, "for we have already stooped to explain our position to the two or three creditors we have. The unfortunate have no creditors; for that, one must have a certain external splendor that we have

lost. But I haven't yet abdicated my reason and my common sense," he added, as if he were speaking to himself.

"Monsieur," replied Godefroid gravely, "the story you told me yesterday would have drawn tears from a usurer!"

"No, no; for Barbet, the bookseller, our landlord, trades on my poverty and employs this Vauthier, his former servant, to spy upon me."

"How can he trade upon it?" queried Godefroid.

"I will tell you that later," the old man replied. "My daughter may be cold; I am in a condition to accept alms, even from my worst enemy, and as you are kind enough—"

"I will bring you some wood," said Godefroid, crossing the landing with an armful of sticks which he placed in the first room of the old man's suite.

Monsieur Bernard took a like amount, and when he saw that little store of fuel, he could not repress the foolish, almost idiotic smile with which people saved from a great danger, which seemed to them inevitable, express their joy—for there is still a remnant of terror in it.

"Accept everything from me without suspicion, my dear Monsieur Bernard, and when your daughter is saved, when you are happy, I will explain it all to you; but until then, let me do as I wish.—I went to see Halpersohn, the Jew doctor, but unfortunately he is out of town; he will not return for two days."

At that moment a voice, which seemed to

Godefroid to be and which really was fresh and melodious, cried: "Papa! papa!" in two different keys.

While talking with the old man, Godefroid had noticed through the cracks in the door opposite the hall door, the white lines of clean, fresh paint, which indicated a vast difference between the invalid's chamber and the other rooms of the suite; but his curiosity, already aroused by that circumstance, was carried to the highest pitch; his charitable mission was no longer aught but a pretext, his object was to see the invalid. He refused to believe that a creature blessed with such a voice could be a loathsome object.

"You take too much trouble, papa!" said the voice. "Why not have more servants than you have? At your age! *Mon Dieu!*"

"You know very well, dear Vanda, that I am not willing that anybody but your son and me should wait on you."

These two sentences, which Godefroid heard through the door, or rather divined, for the sounds were stifled by a portière, gave him a glimpse of the truth. It must be that the invalid, surrounded by luxury, was ignorant of the real plight of her father and her son. Monsieur Bernard's silk dressing-gown, the plants and his conversation with Cartier had already aroused some suspicions of the truth in Godefroid's mind, and he stood there, almost dazed by that miracle of paternal love. The contrast between the invalid's room as he imagined it and

the balance of the suite, was startling! Let the reader judge.

Through the door of the third room, which the old man had left partly open, Godefroid saw two twin cots of painted wood, like those used in the meanest boarding-houses, provided with a straw pallet and a thin mattress over which there was but one coverlid. A small cast-iron stove, like those upon which concierges do their cooking, in front of which lay several squares of peat, would have demonstrated Monsieur Bernard's destitution, even without the other details, all of which were in harmony with that horrible stove.

Stepping nearer to the door, Godefroid saw some earthenware of the sort used in the poorest households; bowls of glazed clay in which potatoes were swimming in dirty water. Two stained tables, laden with papers and books, stood in front of the window looking on Rue Notre-Dame des Champs and told of the nocturnal occupations of the father and son. On the two tables there were two wrought-iron candlesticks such as the poor commonly use, and in them Godefroid spied candles of the cheapest sort, that is to say the sort of which there are eight to the pound.

On a third table, used as a kitchen table, gleamed two plates and a small spoon of silver-gilt, plates, a bowl and cups of Sèvres porcelain, a knife with one steel and one silver blade in its case, in a word, the invalid's service.

There was a fire in the stove and the water in the

kettle was steaming feebly. A wardrobe of painted wood doubtless contained linen and wearing apparel belonging to Monsieur Bernard's daughter, for Godefroid saw the clothes the old man had taken off the night before, lying across his bed as a covering for his feet.

Other garments similarly placed on the grandson's bed justified the presumption that their whole wardrobe was there; and Godefroid saw shoes under the bed. The floor, evidently swept but seldom, resembled the floor of a class-room in a boarding-school. A six-pound loaf, partly eaten, lay on a shelf over the table. In a word, it was poverty in its last stage, poverty reduced to a method, with the unattractive neatness indicative of a determination to endure; hurried poverty that would and ought but cannot do everything, and which therefore uses all its poor belongings in unforeseen ways. A strong, unpleasant odor exhaled from that infrequently cleansed room.

The reception-room, where Godefroid was waiting, was at least decent, and he guessed that it was meant to conceal the horrors of the room in which the grandfather and grandson lived. The walls were hung with a figured paper after the style of a Scotch plaid; the room was furnished with four walnut chairs and a small table, and decorated with the colored engraving of Horace Vernet's portrait of the Emperor, with a portrait of Louis XVIII. and of Charles X. and Prince Poniatowski, presumably a friend of Monsieur Bernard's father-in-law. At

the window were calico curtains with a red border and fringe.

Godefroid, who was on the watch for Népomucène, heard him coming up with a bundle of wood and motioned to him to deposit it quietly in Monsieur Bernard's reception-room, and with a thoughtfulness that denoted considerable progress in the novice, he closed the door of the kennel, so that the widow Vauthier's servant should know nothing of the old man's distress.

The reception-room contained three jardinières full of the most superb flowers; two of them were oblong and one round, they were all made of violet wood and were very handsome; and Népomucène, after he had placed the wood on the floor, could not refrain from exclaiming:

"Ain't they pretty? They must have cost a lot!"

"Don't make so much noise, Jean!" cried Monsieur Bernard.

"Do you hear?" Népomucène asked Godefroid. "The old fellow's *cracked*, for sure!"

"Do you know what you will be at his age?"

"Oh! yes, I know," Népomucène replied, "I shall be in a sugar-bowl."

"In a sugar-bowl?"

"Yes, they'll have made bone-black with my bones, I s'pose. I've often seen the refinery wagons come to Montsouris to get bone-black for their factories, and they told me they used it to make sugar."

With that philosophical reply he went down after another load.

Godefroid discreetly closed Monsieur Bernard's door and left him alone with his daughter. Madame Vauthier, who meanwhile had prepared her new lodger's breakfast, came up to serve it, assisted by Félicité. Godefroid, lost in thought, was gazing at the fire on his hearth. He was absorbed in the contemplation of that misery which included so many different forms of misery, but in which he caught a glimpse too of the ineffable joy of the constant triumphs won by filial and paternal love. It was like pearls scattered upon sack-cloth.

"What works of the imagination, even the most famous, are equal to these realities?" he said to himself. "What a noble life is that in which one espouses such lives as these, in which the mind seeks their causes and effects and makes them run more smoothly, soothes their pain and helps them to attain happiness! To make one's self familiar with misery, to learn the secrets of such households! To be a constant actor in the ever-recurring dramas which famous authors depict for us so entertainingly! I did not believe that doing good was more alluring than vice."

"Is monsieur satisfied?" queried Madame Vauthier, who, with Félicité's assistance, had moved the table near to where Godefroid was standing.

Godefroid thereupon perceived a cup of excellent *café au lait*, accompanied by a smoking omelet, fresh butter and little rosy radishes.

"Where the devil did you fish up those radishes?" asked Godefroid.

"Monsieur Cartier gave them to me," she replied; "I give monsieur the benefit of them."

"What do you charge for such a breakfast as this every day?"

"*Dame*, monsieur, be fair with me: it is very hard to furnish it for thirty sous."

"Thirty sous it is!" said Godefroid; "but how does it happen that they charge only forty-five francs a month for dinners at Madame Machillot's, close by? that makes thirty sous a day."

"Oh! but what a difference there is, monsieur, between preparing a dinner for fifteen and buying everything you need for just one breakfast! See, a small loaf, eggs, butter, sugar, milk, coffee and making the fire. Just think, they ask sixteen sous for just a cup of *café au lait* on Place de l'Odéon, and you give the waiter one or two sous! Here, you have nothing to disturb you; you breakfast at home, in your slippers."

"Very well, it's all right," said Godefroid.

"If it wasn't for Madame Cartier, who supplies me with milk and eggs and herbs, I couldn't do it. You must go and see their place, monsieur. Ah! it's something fine! They keep five boys at work in the garden, and Népomucène goes there to draw water all summer; they let it to me for watering—They make lots of money on melons and strawberries—You seem to be much interested in Monsieur Bernard, monsieur?" observed the widow

Vauthier in honeyed tones; "to make yourself responsible for their debts like that!—Perhaps monsieur doesn't know all they owe. There's the lady who keeps the bookstall on Place Saint-Michel, she comes here every three or four days for thirty francs, and she needs it too. God of Gods! how the poor sick lady reads! She reads and reads! You can see yourself, thirty francs in three months at two sous the volume."

"That's a hundred volumes a month!" cried Godefroid.

"Ah! there goes the old man out to get madame's cream and bread!" continued Widow Vauthier. "The cream's for her tea, for the lady lives on nothing but tea! she takes it twice a day, and twice a week she has to have sweets. She's a dainty one! The old man buys cakes and pies for her at the pastry-cook's on Rue de Buci. When she's in question, he doesn't stop at anything. He says she's his daughter!—Not often a man does all he does, at his age, for his daughter!—He's killing himself, he and his Auguste, for her. Is monsieur like me? I'd give twenty francs to see her. Monsieur Berton says she's a monstrosity, a thing to exhibit for money. They did well to come to a quarter like ours where there isn't anybody. By the way, does monsieur intend to dine at Madame Machillot's?"

"Yes, I intend to make an arrangement with her."

"I don't say it to make you change your mind, monsieur; but as eating-houses go, you'd do better

to go and dine on Rue de Tournon; you wouldn't be bound for a month and you'd get a better dinner."

"Where do you say, Rue de Tournon?"

"At Mère Girard's successor's.—The gentlemen upstairs often go there and they like it—oh! you wouldn't believe how much they like it."

"Very well, Mère Vauthier, I'll follow your advice and go there to dine."

"My dear monsieur," said the concierge, emboldened by the good-humored air that Godefroid designedly adopted, "tell me honestly if you're enough of a *gull* to think of paying Monsieur Bernard's debts?—I should be very sorry to hear it; for just think, my dear Monsieur Godefroid, he's almost seventy, and after he's dead and gone, good-bye, pension! And what will there be to repay you? Young men are very imprudent! Do you know that he owes more than a thousand crowns?"

"To whom?" Godefroid asked.

"Oh! to whom? that's none of my business," replied Dame Vauthier mysteriously; "it's enough that he owes it, and between you and me he's in a tight place, for he can't get trusted for a farthing in the quarter, on that account."

"A thousand crowns!" Godefroid repeated; "you need have no fear, if I had a thousand crowns I should not be a tenant of yours. You see, I can't bear to see others suffer, and for the few hundred francs it will cost me, I shall know that my neighbor —a man with gray hairs!—has bread and wood.

What does it amount to? a man often loses as much at cards. But three thousand francs—good God! think of it!"

Mère Vauthier, misled by Godefroid's pretended frankness, allowed a smile of satisfaction to appear upon her insipid face, and thereby confirmed her tenant's suspicions. Godefroid was convinced that the old woman was an accomplice in a plot against poor Monsieur Bernard.

"It's strange, monsieur, what ideas a body does get in her head! You'll tell me that I am very inquisitive, but when I saw you talking with Monsieur Bernard yesterday, I fancied that you were a bookseller's clerk, for this is the quarter for them. I used to have a proof-reader from a printing-office on Rue de Vaugirard, and he had the same name as you."

"How does my profession concern you?" said Godefroid.

"Bah! whether you tell me or don't tell me, I shall find out all the same," retorted Dame Vauthier. "Take Monsieur Bernard for example, for eighteen months I had no idea who he was: but the nineteenth month I succeeded in discovering that he'd been a magistrate, a judge or something to do with the law, and that he writes about the law. What does he earn at it? I can tell him! And if he had trusted me, I'd 'a' held my tongue.—There!"

"I am not a publisher's clerk yet, but perhaps I shall be soon."

"I suspected as much!" said the widow Vauthier

eagerly, turning away from the bed she was making in order to have a pretext for remaining with her tenant. "You have come to cut the grass from under the feet of—Good! a *man* warned is as good as two—"

"Stop there!" cried Godefroid, planting himself between the Vauthier and the door. "Come, what interest do they give you in this business?"

"Well! well!" rejoined the old woman with a leer, "you're a sharp one, on my word!"

She went and bolted the door of the outer room, then returned and seated herself in a chair by the fire.

"On my honor, as sure as my name's Vauthier, I took you for a student until I saw you giving your wood to Père Bernard. Ah! you're a sly dog! On my word, what an actor you are! I took you for a *gull!* Come, will you promise me a thousand francs? As true as the sun is shining, my old Barbet and Monsieur Métivier have promised me five hundred francs to keep an eye on the grain."

"They! five hundred francs!—nonsense!" cried Godefroid; "two hundred at most, mother, and only *promised* at that; and you don't dare assign them!—If you should put me in the way to do the business they want to do with Monsieur Bernard, I would give four hundred francs!—Tell me, how do they stand?"

"Why, they have given him fifteen hundred francs on his book, and the old man has given them a bond for a thousand crowns. They doled it out to him a hundred francs at a time—arranging matters

so as to leave him in poverty. They're the ones who set the creditors on him, they sent Cartier here for certain—"

At that, Godefroid cast a shrewdly ironical glance at Dame Vauthier, which showed her that he understood the rôle she was playing for the benefit of her landlord.

That last phrase was a twofold source of enlightenment to him, for the strange conversation he had had with the gardener was explained by it.

"Oh!" she continued, "they've got him; for where can he ever get a thousand crowns? They mean to offer him five hundred francs on the day he turns the book over to them, and five hundred francs for every volume offered for sale. The business is done in the name of a bookseller that those two gentlemen have set up in business on Quai des Augustins."

"Oho! little—?"

"Yes, that's the man, Morand, monsieur's old clerk. It seems there's a lot of money to be made."

"Oh! there's a lot of money to be sunk," said Godefroid, with a knowing wink.

There was a gentle tap at the door, and Godefroid, well pleased at the interruption, went and opened it.

"What is said is said, Mère Vauthier," he remarked, as he saw that his visitor was Monsieur Bernard.

"I have a letter for you, Monsieur Bernard," cried the woman.

The old man went down two or three stairs.

"Well no, I haven't any letter, Monsieur Bernard. I simply wanted to tell you to mistrust that little fellow, he's a publisher."

"Ah! that explains everything!" said the old man to himself.

And he returned to his neighbor's room with a completely changed expression.

The cold tranquillity of Monsieur Bernard's features contrasted so strangely with the affable, expansive manner with which he had expressed his gratitude, that Godefroid was impressed by such a sudden transformation.

"I beg your pardon for disturbing you, monsieur; but you have overwhelmed me with kindness since yesterday, and the benefactor imposes obligations upon his debtor."

Godefroid bowed.

"For five years past I have suffered the passion of Jesus Christ every fortnight! for thirty-six years I represented society, the government; I was in those days the public vengeance, and as you can imagine, I lost all my illusions—yes, I have nothing but sorrows now: being what I am, monsieur, the consideration you showed in closing the door of the kennel in which my grandson and I sleep—that trivial act was to me the glass of water of which Bossuet speaks. Yes, I found once more in my heart—in this exhausted heart, which no longer has any tears to shed, as my body no longer has any sweat—I found the last drop of that elixir which, in

youth, makes us look upon the bright side of all human actions, and I came to offer you this hand, which I give to no one but my daughter; I came to bring you the divine rose of belief in good—"

"Monsieur Bernard," said Godefroid, remembering the excellent Alain's lessons, "I have done nothing with the object of earning your gratitude. You are mistaken in that."

"Ah! that is frankness!" replied the ex-magistrate. "I am pleased to see it. I was about to reprove you—forgive me! I esteem you. So you are a publisher, and you have come to deprive the Barbet, Métivier, Morand people of my work?—That explains everything. You make advances to me as they have done; but you do it in a pleasant way."

"Was it the Vauthier who told you that I am a publisher's clerk?" Godefroid asked the old man.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Well, Monsieur Bernard, if you wish to know what I can *give* you above what those gentlemen *offer* you, you must tell me what conditions you have made with them."

"That is fair," replied the ex-magistrate, who seemed delighted to find himself the object of a rivalry by which he could not fail to gain. "Do you know what the work is?"

"No, I simply know that there's money in it."

"It is only half-past nine, my daughter has had her breakfast, my grandson Auguste doesn't come home until quarter to eleven, Cartier will not bring

the plants for an hour: we have time to talk a little.—Monsieur—monsieur—?"

"Godefroid."

"Monsieur Godefroid, the work in question was conceived by me in 1825, at the time when the ministry, impelled by the persistent division of large estates, proposed the law, which was rejected, concerning the right of primogeniture. I had noticed certain imperfections in our codes and in the basic institutions of France. Our codes have been the subject of valuable treatises; but all those treatises were jurisprudence pure and simple; no one had dared to consider the work of the Revolution, or of Napoléon if you please, in its entirety, to study the spirit of those laws, to criticise them in their application. That is the main idea of my work; it is entitled provisionally: *Esprit des Lois Nouvelles;* it embraces the organic laws as well as the codes, all the codes, for we have many more than five codes: my book is in five volumes, with a volume of citations, notes and references. I still have three months' work upon it. The proprietor of this house, once a publisher, divined, scented the speculation from some questions I asked him. For my own part, I thought originally of nothing but the welfare of my country. This Barbet circumvented me. You will wonder how a bookseller could succeed in bedeviling an old magistrate; but you know my story, monsieur, and that man is a usurer; he has the keen glance and the shrewdness of his trade. His money has always trodden close on my needs,

He has always been at hand on the day when despair made me defenceless."

"Of course, my dear monsieur," said Godefroid; "he has an excellent spy in Mère Vauthier. But the conditions? come, tell me plainly what they are."

"They have lent me fifteen hundred francs represented to-day by three notes of hand for a thousand francs each, and those three thousand francs are secured by an agreement concerning the ownership of my work, which I cannot dispose of unless I first pay the notes, and the notes are protested and have gone to judgment. There, monsieur, are the complications brought about by want. At the very lowest estimate, the first edition of that vast work, the result of ten years of toil and thirty-six years of experience, would be worth ten thousand francs.—Well, five days ago Morand offered me a thousand crowns and my three notes for the absolute title.—As I have no means of procuring three thousand two hundred and forty francs, I must submit to their terms, unless you interpose between them and me.—They are not satisfied with my honor; they insisted, for greater security, upon having the notes protested and an order of arrest issued thereon. If I pay them, the usurers will have doubled their money; if I make a bargain with them, they will have a fortune, for one of them is a former paper manufacturer, and God knows how far they can cut down the cost of manufacture. And, as they have my name, they

know that the sale of ten thousand copies is assured."

"What, monsieur, you, a former magistrate—?"

"What would you have? not a friend! not a memory to invoke! And I have saved many heads, if I have caused the fall of many! And then my daughter, my daughter, whose nurse I am and faithful companion, for I work only at night!—Ah! young man, only the unfortunate are fitted to be judges of misery. To-day it seems to me that I was formerly too harsh."

"I do not ask your name, monsieur. I have not a thousand crowns at my disposal, especially after paying Halpersohn and your small debts; but I will save you, if you will promise me not to dispose of your book until I am notified; for it is impossible to transact an affair of such importance without consulting those who are in the business. My employers are people of influence, and I can promise you success, if you can promise me absolute secrecy, even with your children, and hold to your promise."

"The only success I care to attain is my poor Vanda's restoration to health; for, monsieur, such suffering extinguishes every other sentiment in a father's heart, and love of renown is nothing to him who sees the open grave."

"I will come to see you this evening. Halpersohn is expected at any moment, and I have determined to go every day and see if he has arrived. I propose to employ the whole of this day in your service."

"Ah! if you should be responsible for my daughter's cure, monsieur—monsieur, I would be glad to make you a present of my work!"

"Monsieur," said Godefroid, "I am not a bookseller."

The old man made a gesture of astonishment.

"What would you have had me do? I allowed the old Vauthier to think that I was, so that I could ascertain what traps were laid for you."

"What are you then?"

"Godefroid!" the novice replied. "And as you consent to allow me to furnish you with the means of living more bountifully, you may call me Godefroid de Bouillon," he added, with a smile.

The ex-magistrate was too deeply moved to laugh at the jest. He held out his hand and pressed the hand his neighbor gave him.

"You propose to remain *incognito?*" said the old man, gazing at Godefroid with an expression of melancholy mingled with uneasiness.

"Permit me to do so."

"Very well, as you choose!—And come this evening; you shall see my daughter, if her condition makes it possible."

That was evidently the greatest concession the poor father could make; and, from the grateful glance that Godefroid bestowed upon him, he had the satisfaction of seeing that he was understood.

An hour later Cartier arrived with some beautiful plants, replenished the jardinières himself and put fresh moss in them, and Godefroid paid the bill, as

well as the note due at the book stall, which was sent a few moments after. Books and flowers were the daily bread of the poor, sick, we ought rather to say tortured woman, who was content with so little food.

*

As he thought of that family writhing in the coils of misfortune, like Laocoon's—that sublime image of so many lives!—Godefroid, walking toward Rue Marbeuf, felt in his heart even more curiosity than benevolence. That invalid surrounded with luxury in the midst of ghastly poverty caused him to forget the shocking details of the most extraordinary of nervous affections, which very luckily is of most infrequent occurrence, although mentioned by some historians; one of our most gossipy chroniclers, Tallemant des Réaux, cites an instance of it. We love to think of women as elegant and refined even in their most terrible suffering: and so Godefroid anticipated a sort of pleasure in being admitted to that room, which none but the physicians, the father and the son had entered for six years. He ended however by rebuking himself for his curiosity. Novice as he was, he realized that that very natural sentiment would eventually die away as he continued to exercise his charitable ministry, and to see other homes, other sorrows.

One does in fact attain at last the divine loving-kindness, which is surprised at nothing, just as in love one attains the stage of sublime tranquillity, sure of the strength and enduring quality of the sentiment, by constant familiarity with its pains and its pleasures.

Godefroid learned that Halpersohn had returned home during the night; but in the morning he had been obliged to take his carriage and visit his patients, who were waiting for him. The concierge told Godefroid to come the next day before nine o'clock.

Remembering Monsieur Alain's injunctions as to the parsimony which must govern his personal expenditures, Godefroid dined for twenty-five sous on Rue de Tournon, and was rewarded for his self-abnegation by finding himself surrounded by compositors and proof-readers. He overheard a discussion, in which he took part, as to the price of making books, and he learned that an octavo volume, composed of forty sheets, of which a thousand copies were printed, did not cost more than thirty sous per copy, under the most favorable conditions. He determined to go about and ascertain the prices at which publishers of law-books sold their volumes, in order to be prepared to carry on a discussion with the publishers who had Monsieur Bernard in their clutches, if he should fall in with them.

About seven o'clock in the evening he returned to Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse through Rue de Vaugirard, Rue Madame and Rue de l'Ouest, and he realized how deserted the neighborhood was, for he did not see a single person. To be sure it was bitter cold, the snow was falling in huge flakes and the carriages made no sound on the pavements.

"Ah! there you are, monsieur!" said the widow

Vauthier, as Godefroid appeared; "if I had known you'd be home so early, I'd have made a fire."

"It's not necessary," said Godefroid, seeing that the woman was following him; "I shall pass the evening with Monsieur Bernard."

"Oho! you must be his cousin then, to be hand and glove with him the second day.—I thought monsieur would finish the conversation we began."

"Oh yes! the four hundred francs!" said Godefroid in an undertone. "Look you, Mamma Vauthier, you could have had them to-night if you hadn't said anything to Monsieur Bernard. You try to kill two birds with one stone, and you miss both of them; for, so far as I am concerned, you gave me away,—my affair has fallen through."

"Don't think that, my dear monsieur. To-morrow, while you're eating your breakfast—"

"Oh! to-morrow I am going away at daybreak, like your authors upstairs."

Godefroid's previous experiences, his life as a man of fashion and a journalist, had served him in good stead, in that he had acquired sufficient shrewdness to see that, if he acted otherwise, Barbet's accomplice would go to warn the ex-publisher that there was some danger ahead, and that proceedings would be begun in such a way as to deprive Monsieur Bernard of his liberty in short order; whereas, if that trio of grasping usurers were given to understand that their combination was in no danger of shipwreck, they would remain quiet. But Godefroid did not as yet know Parisian nature

when disguised in the garb of a widow Vauthier. The woman proposed to obtain Godefroid's money and her landlord's as well. She hurried away at once to her Monsieur Barbet, while Godefroid was changing his clothes preparatory to calling upon Monsieur Bernard's daughter.

The clock on the Convent of the Visitation, the public clock of the quarter, was striking eight when the curiosity-ridden Godefroid knocked softly at his neighbor's door. It was opened by Auguste, who had the evening to himself, it being a Saturday. He was dressed in a short black velvet coat, black velvet trousers of neat appearance and a blue silk cravat; but Godefroid's amazement at seeing the young man in such different guise, suddenly ceased when he found himself in the invalid's room: he realized how necessary it was that both father and son should be well dressed.

In truth, the contrast between the wretchedness of the room he had seen in the morning and the sumptuousness of this other room was so great that Godefroid was inevitably dazzled by it, although he was accustomed to the luxurious and refined surroundings of wealth.

The walls, hung with yellow silk relieved by bright green fringe, imparted an air of gayety, so to speak, to the room, the floor of which was concealed by a flowered moquette carpet with a white ground. The two windows, hung with beautiful double curtains of white silk, formed two lovely gardens, as it were, the jardinières were so

abundantly filled. All this magnificence, so rare in that quarter, was hidden from the outside world by close blinds. The woodwork was painted a pure white, relieved by occasional lines of gold.

At the door was a heavy embroidered portière, with a yellow background and fanciful leaves, which shut out all noise from without. That superb portière was the work of the invalid, who worked like a fairy when she had the use of her hands.

At the end of the room, opposite the door, was the fireplace, with a mantel-shelf upholstered in green velvet upon which were divers extremely elegant objects of art, the only relics of the opulent days of the two families:—a curious clock, an elephant bearing a porcelain tower, filled with a profusion of flowers, two candelabra of the same style, and valuable Chinese ornaments. Fender, fire-dogs, shovel, tongs, all were of the most expensive kind.

The largest jardinière stood in the centre of the room, beneath a centre-piece of rose-work from which depended a chandelier of flowered porcelain.

The bed on which the magistrate's daughter lay was one of the beautiful carved beds, in white and gold, which were made under Louis XV. By the invalid's pillow stood a pretty inlaid table, on which was everything necessary for the comfort of that bedridden life. Against the wall was a candelabrum with two branches, which could be moved forward or back with the slightest touch of the hand. A small table, most conveniently arranged and adapted

to the wants of the invalid, stood in front of her. The bed, covered with a superb counterpane and hung with curtains caught back by bands of silk, was laden with books and a work-basket; and Godefroid could hardly have distinguished the invalid under all those things, except for the two candles in the movable candlestick.

There was naught but a very pale face, darkened around the eyes by pain, in which gleamed two flashing eyes, and which displayed, as its principal ornament, a mass of magnificent black hair, of which the numberless carefully-arranged long curls showed that the arrangement and care of her hair occupied the invalid a part of the morning, as was also indicated by a portable mirror at the foot of the bed.

No one of the modern refinements of luxury was lacking. A few gewgaws, provided for poor Vanda's amusement, proved that that paternal love sometimes reached the point of delirium.

The old man rose from a superb white and gold Louis XV. couch, upholstered in tapestry, and stepped forward to meet Godefroid, who most assuredly would not have recognized him, for the cold, stern features wore the animated expression peculiar to old men who have retained the nobility of manner and the apparent light-heartedness of the courtier. His puce-colored gown harmonized with his luxurious surroundings, and he took snuff from a gold snuff-box enriched with diamonds!

"This, my dear child," said Monsieur Bernard to

his daughter, taking Godefroid by the hand, "is our neighbor of whom I have told you."

He motioned to his grandson to bring one of the two easy-chairs, similar to the couch, which stood one on each side of the fireplace.

"Monsieur's name is Monsieur Godefroid, and he is full of sympathy for us."

Vanda moved her head in reply to Godefroid's bow; and by the way in which her neck bent forward and back, Godefroid saw that all the invalid's life resided in her head. The emaciated arms, the flabby hands lay upon the fine, white sheet, like objects foreign to the body, which seemed to take up no space in the bed. The necessary articles for the invalid's use were behind the headboard of the bed, in a cabinet with a silk curtain.

"You, monsieur, are the first person, except the doctors, who have ceased to be men in my eyes, whom I have seen for six years; you cannot imagine therefore the interest you have aroused in me since my father told me of your promised visit.—No, it was an unmanageable, passionate curiosity, like that felt by our mother Eve. My father, who is so kind to me, my son, whom I love so dearly, are most certainly sufficient to fill the desert of a heart now almost without a body; but that heart continues to be a woman, after all! I realized it from the childish joy that the hope of a visit from you afforded me. You will do me the pleasure of taking a cup of tea with us, won't you?"

"Monsieur promised me the evening," said the

old man, with the grace of a millionaire doing the honors of his mansion.

Auguste was sitting on an embroidered chair, by a little inlaid table with copper ornaments, reading a book by the light of the candles on the mantel.

"Auguste, my child, tell Jean to come and serve tea in an hour."

She accompanied the words with a meaning glance, to which Auguste replied by a sign.

"Would you believe, monsieur, that I have had no other servants than my father and my son for six years, and I could not endure any others now. If they should fail me, I should die. My father won't allow Jean, a poor Norman who has been in our service thirty years, to come into my room."

"I should think not!" said the old man slyly; "monsieur has seen him; he saws the wood and brings it up, he cooks, he does errands, he wears a dirty apron; he would ruin all these fine things, so necessary in the eyes of my poor daughter, to whom this room is the whole of nature—"

"Ah! madame, monsieur your father is quite right—"

"Why so?" said she. "If Jean had ruined my room, my father would have refurnished it."

"True, my child; but what deters me from doing it is that you cannot leave it; and you don't know the upholsterers of Paris! They would take more than three months to refurnish your room. Think of the dust that would come from your carpet if it should be taken up. Let Jean take care of your

room! Can you think of such a thing? By taking the minute precautions of which a father and a son are capable, we have spared you the annoyance of sweeping and dust. If Jean should so much as come into the room to wait on us, it would be all over in a month."

"It isn't from economy," said Godefroid, "it is for the good of your health. Monsieur your father is right."

"I don't complain," replied Vanda in a coquettish tone.

Her voice produced the effect of a concert. Mind, movement and life were all concentrated in the voice and the expression; for Vanda, by studies for which she certainly had had abundant time, had succeeded in overcoming the difficulties caused by the loss of her teeth.

"I am happy still, monsieur, even in the horrible misfortune with which I am afflicted; for abundant means are certainly of great assistance in enduring my suffering. If we had been poor, I should have died eighteen years ago, and I am still alive!—I have enjoyments, and they are the keener because they are constant victories over death.—You will consider me very talkative!" she added with a smile.

"Madame," Godefroid replied, "I could entreat you to talk all the time, for I have never heard a voice to be compared to yours—it is genuine music! Rubini is not more enchanting—"

"Do not speak of Rubini, of the Italiens," said the old man with a tinge of melancholy in his tone.

"Rich as we are, it is impossible for me to afford my daughter, who was a great musician, that pleasure, which she is mad to enjoy."

"Pardon me," said Godefroid.

"You will become accustomed to us," said the old man.

"This is the process," said the invalid with a smile. "When we have cried *casse-cou* at you several times, you will be familiar with the blind-man's-buff of our conversation."

Godefroid exchanged a swift glance with Monsieur Bernard, who, seeing tears in his neighbor's eyes, put his finger to his lips to entreat him not to be found wanting in the heroism that he and his grandson had displayed for seven years.

This sublime, never-ending imposture, evidenced by the absolute illusion of the invalid, produced upon Godefroid the effect of looking down a sheer precipice, which two chamois-hunters were descending with perfect ease. The magnificent gold snuff-box, studded with diamonds, with which the old man carelessly toyed, sitting at the foot of his daughter's bed, was like the stroke of genius in the work of a man of talent, that evokes a cry of admiration. Godefroid looked at the snuff-box, wondering why it was not sold or at the Mont-de-Piété; he determined to mention it to the old man.

"My daughter was so excited when I told her of your visit this evening, Monsieur Godefroid, that all the extraordinary phenomena of her disease, which have driven us to despair for twelve days past,

have completely disappeared.—Judge if I am grateful to you!"

"And I!" cried the invalid in a coaxing tone and bending toward him with a movement instinct with coquetry. "To me monsieur is the deputy of society. Since I was twenty years old, monsieur, I have not known what a salon is, an evening party, a ball. And remember that I love dancing, that I am wild over the theatre, and that I dote on music above all things. I divine everything by thought! I read much. Then my father tells me what is going on in society."

As she said that, Godefroid started as if to bend his knee to the poor old man.

"Yes, when he goes to the Italiens, and he goes very often, he describes the ladies' dresses and the effect the singing produces on him. Oh! I would like to be cured, in the first place on my father's account, for he lives only for me as I live for him and in him; and secondly, for my son, to whom I would like to give a different mother! Ah! monsieur, such accomplished creatures my old father and my excellent son are!—I would like my health too, so that I could hear Lablache, Rubini, Tamburini, Grisi and *I Puritani*. But—"

"Come, come, my child, be calm.—If we talk music, we are lost!" said the old man with a smile.

He smiled, and the smile, which made his face much younger, evidently was always successful in deceiving his daughter.

"Well, I will be very good," said Vanda with a rebellious pout; "but give me an accordion."

That instrument was then newly invented; it could, if desired, be placed on the invalid's bed and required only the pressure of the foot to produce notes like those of the organ. In its most elaborate form it was equal to a piano; but it cost three hundred francs. The invalid, who read the newspapers and reviews, knew of the existence of such an instrument and had longed for one for two months.

"Yes, madame, you shall have one," Godefroid replied, in obedience to a glance from the old man. "A friend of mine, who is just starting for Algiers, has a fine one which I will borrow; so before purchasing one, you will be able to try that. It is possible that the notes, which are very loud and penetrating, will be disagreeable to you—"

"Can I have it to-morrow?" she asked, with the animation of a Creole.

"To-morrow will be too soon," observed Monsieur Bernard, "besides, to-morrow is Sunday."

"Ah!" she said, glancing at Godefroid, who fancied that he saw a soul flashing in Vanda's eyes as he watched with admiration her ubiquitous glance.

Until that moment, Godefroid had known nothing of the power of the voice and eyes, when they have become the whole life. Her glance was no longer a mere glance, it was a flame, or, better still, a divine flash, a sentient beam of life and understanding, visible thought! The voice with its ever-varying intonations took the place of movements,

gestures, poses of the head. The variations of the complexion, which changed color like the fabulous chameleon, made the illusion, or, if you please, the mirage, complete. That face, drawn by pain, buried in that pillow of fine linen trimmed with lace, was a whole person in itself.

Never in his life had Godefroid gazed upon such a grand spectacle; his capacity for emotion was hardly sufficient. Another sublime feature—for everything was anomalous in that poetic, yet awful state of affairs—was this: the mind alone lived in the spectators! That atmosphere, filled with sentiment exclusively, had a divine influence. One was no more conscious of his body than the sick woman of hers; one seemed to be all mind. By dint of gazing upon that fragile remnant of a pretty woman, Godefroid forgot the numerous luxurious details of the room, he fancied that he was floating through the sky. Not for half an hour did he notice a cabinet filled with curiosities standing beneath a superb portrait which the invalid asked him to examine, for it was a Géricault.

"Géricault was from Rouen," she said, "and as his family was under some obligations to my father, the first president, he thanked us with that masterpiece, in which you see me at the age of sixteen."

"You have a very beautiful picture," said Godefroid, "and altogether unknown to those who have studied the exceedingly rare works of that genius."

"To me," she said, "it is now simply a thing that I am attached to, for I live only through the heart;

and I have the loveliest life," she added, glancing at her father and putting her whole soul into the glance. "Ah! monsieur, if you knew what my father is! Who could ever believe that that great and stern magistrate, to whom the Emperor was under such great obligations that he gave him that snuff-box, and whom Charles X. attempted to reward with that cabinet of Sèvres ware," she said, pointing to the cabinet; "who could believe that that firm upholder of the government and the law, that learned publicist, has, in a heart of stone, a mother's softness of heart?—Oh! papa! papa! kiss me—come, you must come, if you love me!"

The old man rose, leaned over the bed and kissed the noble, poetic, white brow of his daughter, whose frenzies did not always resemble that tempest of affection.

The old man walked back and forth; he wore slippers embroidered by his daughter, and he made no sound.

"What is your business, monsieur?" she asked Godefroid, after a pause.

"Madame, I am employed by certain devout persons to assist those who are very unfortunate."

"Ah! what a beautiful mission, monsieur!" she said. "Do you know that I have had an idea of devoting myself to that same calling? But what ideas have I not had?" she continued, with a movement of the head. "Pain is like a torch that illumines one's life. So, if I should recover my health—"

"You would amuse yourself, my child," the old man interrupted.

"Certainly," she replied, "I long to do it, but shall I be able? My son, I trust, will be a magistrate worthy of his two grandfathers, and he will leave me. What am I to do? If God restores my life, I shall devote it to Him! Oh! but not until I have given you both all that you want of it!" she cried, glancing at her father and her son. "There are moments, father dear, when Monsieur de Maistre's ideas work upon me, and I believe that I am expiating some crime."

"That's what comes of reading so much!" cried the old man, evidently grieved.

"That gallant Polish general, my great grandfather, was innocently involved in the partition of Poland."

"Well, well, now comes Poland!" exclaimed Bernard.

"What can you expect, papa? my suffering is infernal, it gives me a horror of life, it inspires me with disgust of myself. Well, tell me how I have deserved it? Such diseases are not simply a disturbance of the health, the whole organization is perverted, and—"

"Sing the national air your poor mother used to sing; monsieur will like to hear you for I have told him about your voice," said the old man, evidently seeking to divert his daughter's mind from the direction it had taken.

Vanda began to sing in a low, soft voice, a ballad

in the Polish tongue, at which Godefroid was almost dazed with admiration and transfixed with sadness. The melody, which was not unlike the drawling, melancholy airs of Bretagne, was one of those that echo in the heart long after one has ceased to hear them. As he listened to Vanda, Godefroid looked at her, but he could not endure the ecstatic glance of that poor wreck of a woman, almost a madwoman in fact, and he let his eyes rest on the tassels that hung from each corner of the canopy of the bed.

"Ha! ha!" said Vanda, beginning to laugh at Godefroid's close scrutiny, "you are wondering what those are used for, aren't you?"

"Vanda! Vanda! be calm, my child! See, here's the tea," said the father.—"This is a very expensive machine, monsieur," he said to Godefroid. "My daughter cannot lift herself, nor can she stay in bed unless the bed is made and the sheets changed. These cords pass through pulleys, and by passing under her a square piece of leather with rings at the corners through which those cords are passed, we can raise her without tiring her or ourselves."

"They raise me!" repeated Vanda wildly.

Luckily Auguste appeared, bringing a tea-pot, which he placed upon a little table, upon which he placed the Sèvres tea service also, together with sandwiches and cakes. Next he brought cream and butter. That sight suddenly produced an entire change in the invalid's symptoms, which had indicated the approach of a nervous attack.

"See, Vanda, here is Nathan's new novel. If

you lie awake to-night, you'll have something to read."

"*La Perle de Dol!* Ah! that must be a love story.—Auguste, do you know, I am to have an accordion?"

Auguste suddenly raised his head and glanced at his grandfather with a curious expression.

"See how he loves his mother!" continued Vanda. "Come and kiss me, my little puss. No, you must thank this gentleman and not your grandfather, for our neighbor is going to lend me one to-morrow morning.—How is it made, monsieur?"

At a sign from the old man Godefroid explained the construction of the accordion at length, as he sipped his tea, which was brewed by Auguste, and, being of superior quality, was delicious.

About half-past ten, the novice retired, weary of contemplating the insane struggle of the father and son, but admiring their heroism and the patience with which day after day they played their double rôles, both equally distressing.

"Well," said Monsieur Bernard, following him to his room, "now you understand, monsieur, the life I lead! Every hour I endure the suspense of the robber, listening intently to the slightest sound. A word, a gesture might kill my daughter! A bauble missing from among those she is accustomed to see every day would reveal the whole truth to that mind, which sees through the walls."

"Monsieur," replied Godefroid, "on Monday, Halpersohn will pass judgment on your daughter,

for he has returned. I doubt if science can restore her bodily strength—"

"Oh! I do not expect it," said the ex-magistrate with a sigh; "but if he only can render life endurable to her. I relied upon your quick perception, monsieur, and I wanted to thank you, for you grasped the whole situation.—Ah! she is having one of her attacks!" he cried, as he heard a shriek through the partition; "she has gone beyond her strength."

He pressed Godefroid's hand and hastened back to his own apartments.

*

The next morning, at eight o'clock, Godefroid knocked at the door of the famous Polish physician. He was escorted by a footman to the first floor of the little house, which he had had time to examine while the concierge was finding and summoning the servant.

Luckily, as he expected, Godefroid's promptness saved him the tedium of waiting; he was, in all probability, the first arrival. From a very simply furnished reception room, he passed into a large study, where he found an old man in a dressing-gown, smoking a long pipe. The dressing-gown, which was of shiny black bombazine, dated back to the Polish emigration.

"What can I do for you," said the doctor, "for you are not sick."

And he bestowed upon Godefroid a glance in which there was the curious puzzling expression characteristic of the eyes of the Polish Jew, those eyes which seem to have ears.

Halpersohn was, to Godefroid's vast surprise, a man of some fifty-six years, with short Turkish legs and a broad, powerful chest. There was a suggestion of the oriental about him, and his face must have been very handsome in his youth; he still possessed a genuine Hebrew nose, long and hooked like a Damascus scimitar. The forehead, a true

Polish forehead, broad and noble, but wrinkled like crumpled paper, recalled the forehead of St. Joseph in the paintings of the old Italian masters. The sea-green eyes, set in grayish, wrinkled membranes, like a parrot's eyes, expressed a high degree of craft and avarice. Lastly his mouth, slit like a wound, added to that sinister countenance all the ugliness of suspicion.

That pale, thin face—for Halpersohn was remarkably thin—surmounted by unkempt black hair, was adorned by a very long and heavy black beard, sprinkled with white, which concealed the lower half of the face, so that one saw only the forehead, eyes, nose, cheek-bones and mouth.

This friend of the revolutionist Lelewel wore a black velvet cap, which made a black point on his forehead, bringing into bold relief its extreme whiteness, worthy of the brush of Rembrandt.

The question propounded by the physician, who became so famous by reason of his talent as well as of his avarice, caused Godefroid some surprise, and he said to himself:

"Does he take me for a robber?"

The answer to that question was found on the doctor's table and mantelpiece. Godefroid supposed that he was the first to arrive, but he was the last. His patients had deposited on the mantelpiece and the edge of the table fees of no mean amount, for Godefroid spied piles of pieces of twenty francs and forty francs, and two one-thousand franc notes. Was that the proceeds of one morning? He doubted

it very much, and believed that it must be the profits of some shrewd invention of his mind. Perhaps the avaricious but infallible doctor was anxious to increase his receipts by allowing his patients, who were made up of wealthy people, to believe that they were giving him rolls of gold instead of "flimsies."

Moses Halpersohn was entitled to be paid handsomely, by the way, for he *cured,* and cured just those desperate diseases which medical science abandoned. Europeans do not know that the Slavic peoples possess many secrets; they have a collection of sovereign remedies, the result of their intercourse with the Chinese, the Persians, the Cossacks, the Turks and the Tartars. Some peasant women, who pass for sorceresses, effect radical cures of madness in Poland with the juices of herbs. In that country there is a whole system of uncodified observations of the effects of certain plants and of the barks of some trees reduced to powder, which are transmitted from family to family, and miraculous cures are made there.

Halpersohn, who was considered a quack for five or six years, because of his powders and medicaments, possessed the inborn science of great physicians. Not only was he a scholar and a man of the closest powers of observation, but he had traveled through Germany, Russia, Persia and Turkey, where he had gathered up many traditions; and, as he was acquainted with chemistry, he became the living library of the secrets scattered among *les*

bonnes femmes, as they say in France, from all the countries through which he had journeyed, in the wake of his father, by trade a traveling peddler.

We must not believe that the scene in *Richard en Palestine,* where Saladin cures the King of England, is a fiction. Halpersohn possesses a silk purse which he dips in water to color it slightly, and certain fevers yield to that water when taken by the invalid. According to him the powers of plants are infinite, and it is possible to cure the most horrible diseases. But he, like his confrères, sometimes stops short in the face of things that he cannot understand. Halpersohn approves of the invention of homœopathy, more because of its therapeutics, than for its medical system; he corresponded at this time with Hedenius of Dresden, Chelius of Heidelberg and the famous German physicians, keeping his hand closed, although it was full of discoveries. He did not choose to instruct pupils.

The frame was in harmony with that portrait from a canvas of Rembrandt. The study, hung with a paper in imitation of green velvet, was shabbily furnished with a green divan. The carpet, of different shades of green, showed the nap. A great black leather easy-chair, intended for patients, stood in front of the window, which was hung with green curtains. A mahogany desk-chair, Roman in shape, and covered with green morocco, was the doctor's seat.

Between the fireplace and the long table at which he was writing, was a common iron chest, standing

against the centre of the wall opposite the fireplace, and upon it stood a clock of Vienna granite, supported by a bronze group, representing Love playing with Death, a present from a great German sculptor, whom Halpersohn had cured, in all probability. The only ornaments on the mantelpiece were a cup with a candlestick on each side of it. On each side of the divan were two ebony corner-pieces to hold plates, upon which Godefroid saw divers silver bowls, carafes and napkins.

This simplicity, which might almost be called bareness, made a deep impression on Godefroid, who had the power of embracing everything at a glance, and he recovered his *sang-froid*.

"I am perfectly well, monsieur; I do not come on my own account, therefore, but in behalf of a lady whom you should have visited long ago. I refer to a lady who lives on Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse."

"Oh! yes, that lady has sent her son to me several times. Very good, monsieur, let her come at my hour for consultation."

"Let her come!" repeated Godefroid indignantly; "why, monsieur, she can't be moved from her bed to a chair; she has to be raised with straps!"

"You're not a physician, monsieur?" asked the Jew doctor with a curious leer, which made his face even more vicious than it naturally was.

"If the Baron de Nucingen should send word to you that he was ill and wished to see you, would you reply: 'Let him come here?'"

"I would go to him," replied the Jew coolly, expectorating into a Dutch spittoon made of mahogany and filled with sand.

"You would go," retorted Godefroid mildly, "because the Baron de Nucingen has two millions a year, and—"

"The rest has nothing to do with the matter—I would go."

"Very well, monsieur, you will come and see the invalid on Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse for the same reason. Although I haven't the Baron de Nucingen's fortune, I am here to tell you that you may put your own price on the cure, or on your services, if you fail. I am ready to pay you in advance; but monsieur, would not you, a Polish émigré, a communist, I believe, make a sacrifice to Poland? for the lady in question is the grand-daughter of General Tarlovski, Prince Poniatowski's friend."

"Monsieur, you came to ask me to cure this lady, and not to give me advice. In Poland I am a Pole; in Paris I am a Parisian. Everyone does good in his own way, and I beg you to believe that the avidity with which I am credited has its reasons. The treasure I am amassing has its destination, it is sacred. I sell health: the rich can pay for it and I make them pay. The poor have their own doctors. If I hadn't an object, I wouldn't practice medicine. I live soberly, and I pass my time traveling about; I am lazy and I was once a gambler. Have done, young man! You are not old enough to pass judgment on old men."

Godefroid made no reply.

"Do you live with the grand-daughter of that idiot who had no courage to do anything but fight, and who handed his country over to Catherine II.?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Be at home Monday at three o'clock," he said, laying aside his pipe and taking up his memorandum book in which he wrote a few words. "You will hand me two hundred francs when I arrive; and, if I promise to cure her, you will give me a thousand crowns.—He told me," he continued, "that the woman is shrivelled up as if she had fallen into the fire."

"Monsieur, you have the assurance of the most celebrated physicians in Paris, that it is a nervous disorder, the symptoms of which are so extraordinary that they denied that they were possible until they saw them."

"Ah! I remember now the details that the little fellow gave me.—Until to-morrow, monsieur."

Godefroid bowed to that extraordinary yet interesting individual, and took his leave. There was nothing about him to indicate or suggest the physician, not even the bare study, in which the only article of furniture that caught the eye was that formidable chest of Huret or Fichet.

Godefroid arrived at Passage Vivienne in time to purchase, before the shop closed, a magnificent accordion, which he ordered sent to Monsieur Bernard, giving his address.

Then he went to Rue Chanoinesse by way of

Quai des Augustins, where he hoped to find the shop of one of the commission dealers in books open; he was fortunate enough to find one, where he had a long conversation with a young clerk on the subject of law-books.

He found Madame de la Chanterie and her friends just returned from high mass; Godefroid answered her first glance with a significant shake of the head.

"Why, is not our dear Père Alain with you?" he asked.

"He will not come this Sunday," replied Madame de la Chanterie; "you won't see him until a week from to-day—that is, unless you go to the rendezvous he appointed."

"Madame," said Godefroid, "you know he doesn't intimidate me like these gentlemen, and I hoped to make my confession to him."

"And what about me?"

"Oh! I will tell you everything, and I have many things to tell. For a beginning, I fell in with the most extraordinary of all forms of misery, a barbarous combination of destitution and luxury; and with it all, human figures of a sublimity surpassing all the creations of our most popular novelists."

"Nature, especially moral nature, is always above art, as far as God is above His creatures. But tell me about your experiences in the unknown regions to which you made your first journey."

Monsieur Nicolas and Monsieur Joseph—Abbé de Vèze had remained behind for a few moments at Notre-Dame—left Madame de la Chanterie alone

with Godefroid, who, being still under the spell of the emotion of the preceding evening, narrated everything, to the smallest details, with the force, the energy and the fervor caused by the first impression of such a spectacle and its accompaniments, both men and things. He achieved a great triumph, for the tranquil, gentle Madame de la Chanterie, accustomed as she was to descend to the deepest depths of human suffering, shed tears.

"You did well," she said, "to send the accordion."

"I would like to do much more," replied Godefroid, "for that family is the first to teach me the pleasures of charity; I desire to assure to that sublime old man the greater part of the profits of his great work. I do not know whether you have enough confidence in my capacity to put me in the way to manage an affair of such magnitude. According to the information I have gathered, it would require about nine thousand francs to make an edition of fifteen hundred copies of the book, and their value, at the lowest estimate, would then be twenty-four thousand francs. As we must first pay the three thousand and some hundred francs for which the manuscript is pledged, the whole amount to be risked will be something like twelve thousand francs. Oh! Madame, if you knew how bitterly I regretted, as I walked hither from Quai des Augustins, that I have squandered my little fortune! The spirit of Charity has appeared to me and inflamed the ardor of the novice; I propose to renounce the world, I propose to lead the life these gentlemen

lead, and I will be worthy of you. Many times in these last two days I have blessed the chance that brought me here. I will obey you in everything, until you decide that I am worthy to be one of you."

"Listen to me," replied Madame de la Chanterie gravely, after reflecting for a moment, "for I have some important things to disclose to you. You have been fascinated, my child, by the poetry of misfortune. Yes, misfortune often has a poetry of its own; for, in my view, poetry is a sort of excess of sentiment, and suffering is a sentiment. So many people live by suffering!"

"Yes, Madame, I was seized by the demon of curiosity. What can you expect; I am not accustomed as yet to penetrate to the heart of unfortunate existences, and I do not go forward with the calmness of your three devout soldiers of the Lord. But, understand me, it was after I had conquered my curiosity that I determined to devote myself to your work!"

"Listen, my dear angel," said Madame de la Chanterie, uttering the three words with a gentle fervor by which Godefroid was strangely moved, "we have forbidden ourselves absolutely—we do not misuse words here, and what is forbidden never comes to our mind—we have made it a law never to enter into speculations. To print a book for purposes of sale and to expect profits from it, is a business transaction, and enterprises of that sort would involve us in the embarrassments of business. This certainly seems to me a practicable matter,

yes, and a necessary one. Do you suppose it is the first case of the kind we have had? Twenty times, yes, a hundred times, we have discovered ways of saving households, whole families thus! Now, what would become of us if we had gone into affairs of that sort? We should have been traders. To form a company to deal in misfortune is not to work one's self, but to make misfortune do the work. In a few days you will fall in with misery more hopeless than this; will you do the same thing? If so, you will soon be overwhelmed! Remember, my child, that Messieurs Mongenod have been unable for a year past to look after our accounts. More than half of your time will be taken up in keeping our books. We have nearly two thousand debtors in Paris to-day; and we must at least know the amount of their debts, for the benefit of those who can repay us. We never ask, we wait. We calculate that half of the money we give away is lost. The other half comes back to us, sometimes doubled.—For instance, suppose that this magistrate should die—there are twelve thousand francs in a very precarious condition. But if his daughter is cured, if his grandson is successful and becomes a magistrate some day—why, if he is an honorable man, he will remember the debt, and he will repay the money of the poor with interest. Do you know that more families than one, whom we have rescued from want and started on the road to fortune, have laid aside the share of the poor and repaid the sums lent, doubled and sometimes trebled? Those are

our only speculations! In the first place, consider, as to the subject with which your mind is filled—and it is quite right that it should be so—that the sale of this magistrate's work depends upon the excellence of the work itself; have you read it? And then, even if the book is a good one, how many good books have waited one, two, three years for the success they deserved! How many wreaths have been laid upon tombs! And I know that publishers have methods of dealing and realizing upon their wares that make their trade the most haphazard and difficult to be understood of all Parisian trades. Monsieur Nicolas will tell you of these difficulties, which are inherent in the nature of books. Thus, you see, we are sensible, we are experienced in all forms of misery as in all trades, for we have been studying Paris for a long while.—The Mongenods help us; they are our torches, and through them we know that the Bank of France always looks with suspicion on the publishing trade, although it is one of the most honorable; but it is not well carried on. As for the four thousand francs necessary to rescue this noble family from the horrors of poverty,—for the poor boy and his grandfather must be properly fed and be enabled to dress decently—I will give them to you. There are sufferings, miseries, wounds, which we relieve instantly, without hesitation, without trying to find out whom we are assisting: religion, honor, character, all are matters of indifference to us; but, when it comes to lending the money of the poor to assist

misfortune in the active form of trade or commerce —why, then, we demand security with the implacability of the usurer. So hereafter limit your enthusiasm to finding the most honorable publisher that you can for the old man. Monsieur Nicolas will help you in that. He knows advocates, professors and authors of books on jurisprudence; and by next Sunday he will certainly have some good advice to give you. Have no fear; if it is possible, this difficulty will be solved. But perhaps it would be well for Monsieur Nicolas to read this magistrate's work. Obtain the manuscript for him, if it can be done."

Godefroid was utterly amazed by the sound common sense of this woman whom he had supposed to be animated solely by the spirit of charity. He bent his knee and kissed one of Madame de la Chanterie's lovely hands, saying:

"So you are the spirit of reason too?"

"We are obliged to be everything in our business," she replied with the gentle gayety characteristic of the true saint.

There was a moment's silence, broken by the exclamation from Godefroid:

"Two thousand debtors you said, Madame? two thousand accounts! why, that is a tremendous number!"

"Oh! yes, two thousand accounts," she replied, "which may be closed, as I have just said, by payments based upon the sense of honor of our debtors; for we have fully three thousand other families who never pay us anything but thanks. So, as I say, we

feel the need of having properly kept books. And, if you possess a discretion that will endure every test, you shall be our financial oracle. We are obliged to keep a journal, a ledger, a book of current accounts and a cash-book. We have many notes, but we waste too much time trying—Here are the gentlemen," she added.

Godefroid was grave and pensive and took little part in the conversation at first; he was bewildered by the revelation Madame de la Chanterie had just made to him in a tone that proved that she wished to reward him for his ardor.

"Two thousand families assisted!" he said to himself; "why, if they all cost as much as Monsieur Bernard is going to cost us, we must have millions of money planted in Paris!"

This thought was one of the last manifestations of the worldly spirit, which was insensibly dying away in Godefroid. Upon reflection, he realized that the combined fortunes of Madame de la Chanterie, Messieurs Nicolas, Alain, Joseph, together with that of the late magistrate, Popinot, the gifts collected by Abbé de Vèze and the sums advanced by the house of Mongenod, must amount to a considerable sum; and that that capital, increased by the contributions of those debtors who showed themselves grateful, must have increased in twelve or fifteen years like a snowball, as those charitable persons took nothing from it. He gradually obtained a clearer insight into that vast work, and his desire to co-operate therein increased in proportion.

About nine o'clock he started to return on foot to Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse; but Madame de la Chanterie, fearing the solitude of the quarter, forced him to take a cab. As he alighted from the vehicle, Godefroid heard the notes of the accordion, although the shutters were so tightly closed that not a ray of light could be seen; and, when he reached the landing, Auguste, who had evidently been watching for his return, opened the door of the apartment, and said to him:

"Mamma would like to see you, and grandfather invites you to have a cup of tea."

Upon entering the invalid's room, Godefroid found her transfigured by the pleasure of playing upon the instrument; her face was beaming and her eyes shone like diamonds.

"I would have liked to wait for you, so that you could hear the first chords; but I pounced on the little organ like a starving man on a bountiful dinner. You have a heart to understand me, so I am forgiven."

Vanda made a sign to her son, who took his place so as to press the pedal by which the breath of the instrument was expelled; and then, with her eyes gazing upward, like St. Cecilia, the invalid, whose fingers had momentarily recovered strength and agility, played variations upon the Prayer from *Moses*, which she had composed in a few hours from the score, purchased for her by her son. Godefroid discovered in her a talent akin to Chopin's. Her soul manifested itself by divine sounds in which

a strain of gentle melancholy was predominant. Monsieur Bernard had greeted Godefroid with a glance instinct with a feeling long unexpressed. If the source of tears had not been drained dry forever in that old man, wasted by such unremitting, poignant sorrow, it was easy to see that his eyes would have been wet.

He toyed with his snuff-box, gazing at his daughter with indescribable joy.

"To-morrow, madame," said Godefroid, when the music had ceased, "to-morrow your fate will be decided, for I have good news for you. The famous Halpersohn will come to-morrow at three o'clock.—And he promised," he added in Monsieur Bernard's ear, "to tell me the truth."

The old man rose, took Godefroid's hand and led him to a corner of the room, beside the fireplace. He was trembling with emotion.

"Oh! what a night I shall pass! It will be a final decree!" he said in the young man's ear. "My daughter will be cured or sentenced to death!"

"Have courage," Godefroid replied, "and come to my room after we have had our tea."

"Enough, enough, my child," said the old man, "you will bring on one of your paroxysms. Prostration will follow this accession of strength."

He bade Auguste take the instrument away, and handed a cup of tea to his daughter with the wheedling manner of a nurse seeking to anticipate a little child's impatience.

"What sort of man is this doctor?" she asked,

her mind already diverted by the prospect of seeing a stranger.

Like all prisoners, Vanda was devoured by curiosity. When the other physical phenomena of her disease ceased to manifest themselves, they seemed to be transferred to the moral side of her nature, and thereupon she conceived strange whims, extravagant fancies. She wanted to see Rossini; she wept because her father, whom she believed to be omnipotent, refused to bring him to her.

Godefroid thereupon gave a minute description of the Jew doctor and his office, for she knew nothing of her father's previous attempts to consult him. Monsieur Bernard had bade his grandson keep silent as to his visits to Halpersohn, he dreaded so to arouse in his daughter's mind hopes which could not be realized. Vanda seemed to hang upon the words that issued from Godefroid's mouth, she was fascinated, and her longing to see the strange Pole became so ardent that she became lightheaded in a measure.

"Poland has often produced such anomalous, mysterious creatures," said the ex-magistrate. "To-day, for example, besides this doctor, we have Hoëné Vronski, the mystical mathematician, the poet Mickievicz, the seer Tovianski, and Chopin, whose talent is superhuman. Great national commotions always produce a race of deformed giants."

"Oh! dear papa, what a man you are! If you

should write down all you say just to entertain me, you would make your fortune;—for just imagine, monsieur, my dear old father makes up the loveliest stories for me when I have no novels to read, and puts me to sleep in that way. His voice soothes me, and he often allays my pain with his wit. Who will ever reward him!—Auguste, my son, you ought to kiss your grandfather's footprints for me."

The young man turned his lovely moist eyes on his mother, and that glance, overflowing with long pent-up compassion, was a poem in itself. Godefroid rose, took Auguste's hand and pressed it.

"God, madame, has placed two angels by your side!" he cried.

"Yes, I know it. For that reason I often reproach myself for driving them mad.—Come, dear Augustin, kiss your mother.—He's a boy, monsieur, of whom any mother would be proud. He is pure gold, an openhearted, stainless creature; but a little too passionate, like his mamma. Perhaps God nailed me to my bed to keep me from the follies that women commit—who have too much heart," she added with a smile.

Godefroid replied with a smile and a bow.

"Good-night, monsieur; and I pray you thank your friend, for he has made a poor helpless creature happy."

"Monsieur," said Godefroid, when he was in his own apartments with Monsieur Bernard, who accompanied him, "I think I can assure you that you will not be robbed by that trio of fine fellows. I shall

have the necessary funds, but you must turn over to me your agreement relative to the redemption of the manuscript.—And in order that I may do more for you, you will have to let me have the work to be read—not by myself, for I have not enough knowledge of the subject to pass judgment upon it—but by an ex-magistrate of absolute integrity, who will undertake, after determining the merit of the work, to find an honorable house with whom you will be able to make an equitable bargain.—But I do not insist upon that. Meanwhile, here are five hundred francs," he added, handing the bewildered old man a banknote, "to supply your most pressing needs. I do not ask you for any receipt, you will be bound only by your conscience, and your conscience should not speak unless you should hereafter be in more comfortable circumstances. I will undertake to pay Halpersohn—"

"Who, then, are you?" said the old man, falling upon a chair.

"I am nobody," replied Godefroid; "but I am in the service of influential people, to whom your distress is now known and who are interested in you. Ask me nothing more."

"But what principle guides these people?" said the old man.

"Religion, monsieur," Godefroid replied.

"Religion! can it be possible?"

"Yes, the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman religion."

"Do you belong to the order of Jesuits?"

"No, monsieur. Have no fear: these people have

no designs upon you, beyond that of assisting you and of making your family happy once more."

"Can it be possible for philanthropy to become something else than mere vanity?"

"Oh! monsieur," exclaimed Godefroid eagerly, "do not dishonor blessed Catholic charity, the virtue defined by St. Paul!"

Monsieur Bernard, upon that reply, began to stride up and down the room.

"I accept," he said abruptly, "and I have but one way of thanking you, that is to entrust my work to you. The notes and citations are useless to one who has been a magistrate; and I still have two months' work to do, copying the citations, as I told you. Until to-morrow," he added, exchanging a hearty grasp of the hand with Godefroid.

"Can I have made a convert?" said Godefroid to himself, struck by the unfamiliar expression the old man's features had assumed at his last reply.

*

The next afternoon, at three o'clock, a hired carriage stopped in front of the house, and Godefroid saw Halpersohn alight from it, enveloped in a huge bearskin coat. During the night the cold had grown more intense, the thermometer marked ten degrees below the freezing point.

The Jew doctor scrutinized with interest, although stealthily, the room in which his visitor of the preceding day received him, and Godefroid detected a gleam of suspicion, like the point of a dagger, in his eyes. That swift flash of distrust made Godefroid shudder internally, for he thought that the man was likely to be without pity in his dealings; and it is so natural to think of genius as combined with kindness of heart, that he had a renewed feeling of disgust.

"Monsieur," he said, "I see that the simple appearance of my room disturbs you; therefore you will not be surprised by what I do. Here are your two hundred francs, and here are three notes of a thousand francs each," he added, taking from his portfolio the bank notes Madame de la Chanterie had handed him to take Monsieur Bernard's manuscript out of pawn; "but in case you have doubts concerning my responsibility, I offer you, as my references, Messieurs Mongenod, bankers, Rue de la Victoire."

"I know them," replied Halpersohn, bestowing the ten gold-pieces in his pocket.

"He will call on them," thought Godefroid.

"Where does the invalid live?" inquired the doctor, rising like a man who knows the value of time.

"Come this way, monsieur," said Godefroid, going first, as guide.

The Jew scrutinized his surroundings with a sharp and suspicious eye, for he had the stealthy glance of a spy; so that he obtained a clear view of the horrors of indigence through the door of the room in which the magistrate and his grandson slept; unfortunately Monsieur Bernard had gone to don the costume in which he appeared in his daughter's room, and in his haste to admit his visitors, he did not securely close the door of his dog-kennel. He bowed with noble dignity to Halpersohn, and cautiously opened the door of his daughter's room.

"Vanda, my child, here is the doctor," he said.

He stood aside to admit Halpersohn, who still wore his fur coat. The Jew was surprised by the contrast presented by that room, which was an anomaly in that quarter and especially in that house; but his amazement lasted only a short time, for he had often seen, among the Jews of Germany and Russia, such contrasts between what seemed to be profound destitution and concealed wealth. As he walked from the door to the invalid's bed, he did not take his eyes from her, and when he reached the bedside he said to her in Polish:

"You are a Pole?"

"I am not, but my mother was."

"Whom did your grandfather, General Tarlovski, marry?"

"A Pole."

"From what province?"

"She was a Sobolevska from Pinsk."

"Good.—Monsieur is your father?"

"Yes, monsieur."

He turned to Monsieur Bernard.

"Your wife, monsieur—?"

"She is dead," Monsieur Bernard replied.

"Was she very fair?" said Halpersohn, with a slight gesture of impatience at having been interrupted.

"Here is her portrait," replied Monsieur Bernard, taking down a superb frame in which were several lovely miniatures.

Halpersohn felt the patient's head and smoothed her hair, as he glanced at the portrait of Vanda Tarlovska, born Countess Sobolevska.

"Describe to me the troubles growing out of the disease."

He seated himself on the couch and gazed steadfastly at Vanda during the twenty minutes that the father and daughter employed, alternately, in complying with his demand.

"How old is madame?"

"Thirty-eight."

"Ah! good," he cried, springing to his feet, "I will undertake to cure her. I do not promise to

restore the use of her legs, but cured she shall be. But she must be taken to a private hospital in my neighborhood."

"But, monsieur, my daughter cannot be moved—"

"I will answer for her cure," said Halpersohn sententiously; "but only on those conditions. Do you know that she is going to exchange her present disease for another more horrible one, which will last a year perhaps, six months at least? You are madame's father, so you can see what is coming."

"Are you sure?" demanded Monsieur Bernard.

"Sure!" the Jew repeated. "Madame has in her body a principle of disease, a national humor, and we must rid her of it. When you come, you must bring her to me at Chaillot, Rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, Doctor Halpersohn's private hospital."

"But how shall we do it?"

"On a litter, as all invalids are carried to the hospitals."

"But the journey will kill her."

"No."

As he uttered that abrupt *no*, Halpersohn walked to the door; Godefroid joined him on the stairs.

The Jew, who was stifling with the heat, whispered in his ear:

"In addition to the thousand crowns, it will be fifteen francs a day; you must pay for three months in advance."

"Very good, monsieur.—So you will undertake to cure her?" Godefroid asked, standing on the step of the cab which the doctor had hurriedly entered.

"I will answer for her," replied the Pole. "Are you in love with that woman?"

"No," said Godefroid.

"You will not repeat what I am going to confide to you, for I say it only to prove that I am sure of curing her, and if you were to divulge a syllable you would kill the woman."

Godefroid replied with a single gesture.

"She has been for seventeen years a victim of the Polish *plica*, which produces all these symptoms; I have seen more horrible cases of it. Now, I alone know how to expel the *plica* in such a way as to be able to cure it, for it is not always cured. You see, monsieur, how unselfish I am. If she were a great lady, a Baronne de Nucingen or the wife or daughter of any other of the modern Crœsuses, I should receive one hundred, two hundred thousand francs for the cure, whatever I might ask, in fact!—But that's a small matter."

"And the journey?"

"Bah! she will seem to be dying, but she won't die!—She has life enough for a hundred years, when she is once cured.—Go on, Jacques!—Rue Monsieur,—quick!—quick!" he said to the driver.

He drove away, leaving Godefroid on the boulevard, where he stood watching the cab in a bewildered way.

"Who in the world is that devil of a man in the bearskin?" queried La Vauthier, whom nothing escaped. "Is what the cab-driver told me true, that he's the most famous doctor in Paris?"

"What difference does it make to you, Mère Vauthier?"

"Oh! none at all!" she replied, with a leer.

"You did very wrong not to come over to my side," said Godefroid, walking slowly back toward the house; "you would have made more than with Messieurs Barbet and Métivier, from whom you will get nothing."

"Who says I am on their side?" she said, with a shrug of her shoulders; "Monsieur Barbet is my landlord, that's all!"

It required two days to persuade Monsieur Bernard to part from his daughter and send her to Chaillot. Godefroid and the ex-magistrate made the journey walking on each side of the litter with its canopy of blue and white striped ticking, on which lay the dear invalid, almost bound to the mattress, her father had such dread of the convulsive movements caused by her nervous attacks. The little procession started at three o'clock and reached the hospital about five, just at nightfall. Godefroid paid and took a receipt for the four hundred and fifty francs demanded for the first quarter; and when he went downstairs to give the two bearers their *pourboires*, he was joined by Monsieur Bernard, who took from under the mattress a very voluminous sealed package and handed it to Godefroid.

"One of these men will go and call a cab for you," said the old man, "for you could not carry these four volumes far. This is my work; hand it to my censor, I place it in his hands for the whole

of this week. I shall remain in this quarter at least a week, for I do not propose to abandon my child so. I know my grandson, he can take charge of my apartments, especially with your assistance; I commend him to your care. If I were what I once was, I would ask the name of my critic, of this ex-magistrate, for there are few such whom I do not know—"

"Oh! it's no mystery," Godefroid interrupted him. "Since you have such entire confidence in me, I am at liberty to tell you that your censor is the former President Lecamus de Tresnes."

"Of the Royal Court of Paris! Take it—go! he is one of the finest characters of this age! He and the late Popinot, the judge of the Tribunal of First Instance, were magistrates worthy of the glorious days of the old parliaments. All my fears, if I had retained any, would be scattered to the winds now! —Where does he live? I should be glad to go and thank him for the trouble he is taking."

"You will find him on Rue Chanoinesse, under the name of Monsieur Nicolas. I am going there now.—And what about your agreement with your sharpers?"

"Auguste will hand it to you," said the old man, as he returned to the courtyard of the hospital.

A cabriolet summoned by one of the bearers from Quai de Billy arrived at that moment; Godefroid entered it and stimulated the ardor of the driver by the promise of a handsome *pourboire* if he arrived at Rue Chanoinesse in time, for he was anxious to dine there.

Half an hour after Vanda's departure, three men dressed in black, whom La Vauthier admitted through the door on Rue Notre-Dame des Champs, where they had evidently awaited the propitious moment, ascended the stairs, accompanied by that female Judas, and knocked softly at the door of Monsieur Bernard's apartment. As it was a Thursday, the young collegian had been able to stay at home. He opened the door and the three men glided like shadows into the first room.

"What do you want, messieurs?" demanded the young man.

"This is Monsieur Bernard's?—that is to say, Monsieur le Baron's?"

"But what do you want?"

"Oh! you know very well, young man, for we were told that your grandfather just went away with a covered litter. We're not surprised at that! but he had a right to do it. I'm a bailiff, and I have come to seize everything there is here. Monday, you had a summons to pay three thousand francs principal, and the costs, to Monsieur Métivier, under pain of arrest, for which we had an order. And as an old onion hawker knows all about shallots, the debtor took to his heels to avoid going to Clichy. But, if we haven't got him, we shall get a little something out of his fine furniture, for we know all about it, young man, and we're going to investigate."

"Here are the stamped papers your grandpa would never take," interposed La Vauthier, thrusting three summonses into Auguste's hands.

"Remain, madame, we propose to install you as keeper. The law gives you forty sous a day, which isn't to be despised."

"Ah! then I shall see what there is in that beautiful room!" cried Dame Vauthier.

"You shall not set foot in my mother's room!" cried the young man fiercely, darting between the three men in black and the door.

At a sign from the bailiff, his two cursitors and his head clerk, who arrived at that moment, seized Auguste.

"No disturbance, young man! You're not the master here; we'll draw up a report, and you may go and sleep at the prefecture."

When he heard that terrible word, Auguste burst into tears.

"Oh! how lucky it is that mamma has gone!" he said; "this would have killed her!"

A sort of conference took place between the cursitors, the bailiff and Dame Vauthier. Auguste understood, although they talked in low tones, that they were especially desirous to seize his grandfather's manuscripts, and he thereupon opened the door of his mother's room.

"Enter, messieurs, and injure nothing," he said. "You will be paid to-morrow morning."

With that he went, weeping, into the kennel, where he seized his grandfather's notes and citations and put them in the stove, knowing that there was not a spark of fire.

It was done so rapidly that the bailiff, a shrewd,

cunning rascal, worthy of his clients Barbet and Métivier, found the young man weeping on a chair, when he hurried into the kennel, after deciding that the manuscript was not likely to be in the reception-room. Although books and manuscripts are exempt from seizure, the species of chattel mortgage subscribed by the ex-magistrate justified that method of procedure. But it was an easy matter to find ways of delaying the seizure, which Monsieur Bernard would not have failed to do. Hence the necessity of acting cunningly. In that view the widow Vauthier had done her landlord an exceedingly useful turn by neglecting to hand his summonses to the tenant; she intended to drop them in the room as she entered on the heels of the officers, or, if necessary, to tell Monsieur Bernard that she thought that they were meant for the two authors, who had been away for two days.

The formalities of the levy lasted about an hour, for the bailiff omitted nothing, considering the value of the property seized sufficient to pay the debt. When the bailiff had taken his leave, the poor boy took the summonses and hurried away to find his grandfather at the hospital; for the bailiff told him that Dame Vauthier was responsible, under heavy penalties, for the safe-keeping of the property. He could leave the house therefore without fear.

The thought of his grandfather being taken to prison for debt made the poor child mad, as young men are mad, that is to say, he was the victim of one of those dangerous, ominous paroxysms of

excitement, when all the powers of youth effervesce at once and may lead to the commission of evil deeds as well as to displays of heroism. When poor Auguste reached Rue Basse-Sainte-Pierre, the concierge told him that he did not know what had become of the father of the sick woman who had been brought there at five o'clock; that Monsieur Halpersohn's orders were to allow no one, not even her father, to see her for a week, on the risk of endangering her life.

That reply put the finishing touch to Auguste's frenzy. He retraced his steps toward Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, brooding over the most extravagant projects in his despair. He arrived about half-past eight in the evening, almost famished, and so exhausted by hunger and grief, that he listened to Dame Vauthier when she proposed to him to share her supper, which consisted of a *ragout* of mutton with potatoes. The poor child sank half dead upon a chair, in that vile creature's chamber. Encouraged by the old hag's cajolery and honeyed words, he answered certain adroitly framed questions concerning Godefroid, and he gave her to understand that her new tenant was the man who was to pay his grandfather's debts on the morrow; and that they owed to him the happy change that had taken place in their condition within a week. The widow listened to his statements with an incredulous expression, and induced Auguste to drink several glasses of wine.

About ten o'clock they heard the wheels of a cab,

which stopped in front of the house, and the widow cried:

"Ah! there is Monsieur Godefroid."

Auguste at once took the key of his suite and went out to meet the protector of his family; but he found Godefroid's face so changed that he hesitated to speak to him; the thought of his grandfather's danger, however, gave the noble-hearted youth courage.

This is what had taken place on Rue Chanoinesse and had brought the stern expression to Godefroid's face.

The novice arrived in good time and found Madame de la Chanterie and her faithful disciples in the salon. He took Monsieur Nicolas aside and handed him the four volumes of the *Esprit des Lois Modernes*. Monsieur Nicolas at once took the sealed package to his room and came down to dinner; then, after they had passed the early part of the evening in conversation, he went up again, intending to begin the perusal of the work.

Godefroid was greatly surprised when, a few moments after the disappearance of Monsieur Nicolas, he was requested by Manon, on his behalf, to go and speak with him. He went up to his room, under Manon's guidance, and was unable to pay any heed to the interior of the apartments, he was so struck by the transfigured features of his usually placid and unemotional fellow-lodger.

"Did you know," demanded Monsieur Nicolas, once more the stern magistrate, "did you know the name of the author of this work?"

"Monsieur Bernard," Godefroid replied; "I know him only by that name. I did not open the package."

"Ah! true," said Monsieur Nicolas, "I broke the seals myself. You have made no attempt," he continued, "to discover his antecedents?"

"No, I know that he married for love the daughter of General Tarlovski; that his daughter's name is Vanda, as her mother's was, and his grandson's Auguste, and the portrait of Monsieur Bernard that I saw, represented the president of a royal court, in a red robe, if I remember aright."

"See, read this!" said Monsieur Nicolas, pointing to the title of the work, written in Auguste's boldest hand, and arranged thus:

ESPRIT

DES LOIS MODERNES

PAR MONSIEUR BERNARD-JEAN-BAPTISTE-MACLOUD

BARON BOURLAC

formerly procureur-général at the Royal Court of Rouen, and Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor.

"Ah! the executioner of Madame and her daughter and the Chevalier du Vissard!" said Godefroid in a feeble voice.

The novice's legs gave way beneath him and he sank into an armchair.

"A pretty beginning!" he muttered.

"This, my dear Godefroid," resumed Monsieur

Nicolas, "is a matter that concerns us all; you have done your share of it, the rest is for us! Take no further steps, I beg you; go and get whatever you may have left in that house! Not a word to anyone!—absolute secrecy! And tell Baron Bourlac to apply to me. Between now and then we shall have decided how it befits us to act under these circumstances."

Godefroid went down stairs, left the house, took a cab, and was driven rapidly to Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, shuddering with horror at the remembrance of the indictment from the crown office at Caen, of the bloody drama concluded on the scaffold, and of Madame de la Chanterie's term at Bicêtre. He understood the state of abandonment in which that one-time procureur-général, in some respects comparable to Fouquier-Tinville, was passing his declining days, and the reasons for his carefully guarded *incognito*.

"May Monsieur Nicolas avenge poor Madame de la Chanterie in condign fashion!"

He was mentally uttering that most un-Catholic wish, when he spied Auguste.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"My dear, kind monsieur, a misfortune has happened to us that drives me mad! Some villains have been here and seized everything in my mother's room, and they are looking for my grandfather to put him in prison. But those things are not what make me come to you," said the boy, with the noble pride of a Roman; "I have come to

ask you to do me such a favor as people do for those who are condemned to death!"

"Tell me what it is," said Godefroid.

"They came to get possession of my grandfather's manuscripts; and, as I think he has given them to you, I have come to beg you to take the notes, for the concierge won't allow anything to be taken away,—place them with the volumes."

"Very well, very well," said Godefroid, "go quickly and get them."

While the young man went to his room, to return immediately, Godefroid reflected that he was guilty of no crime, and that he must not drive the poor child to despair by talking to him about his grandfather, about the neglect and solitude by which his melancholy old age was being punished for the excesses of political life, and he took the package with a sort of good grace.

"What is your mother's name?" he asked.

"My mother, monsieur, is the Baronne de Mergi; my father was the son of the first president of the Royal Court of Rouen."

"Ah!" said Godefroid, "your grandfather gave his daughter to the son of the famous Mergi?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Leave me, my young friend," said Godefroid.

He escorted the young Baron de Mergi to the landing and summoned Dame Vauthier.

"Mère Vauthier," he said, "you may dispose of my apartments, I shall never return here."

And he went down to return to his cab.

"Did you hand anything to that gentleman?" Dame Vauthier asked Auguste.

"Yes," was the reply.

"You're a pretty fellow! he's an agent of your enemies! He has managed the whole business, that's sure. The proof that he did the trick is that he's never coming back here. He told me I could advertise my rooms to let."

Auguste rushed down to the boulevard, ran after the cab and shouted so loud that he finally succeeded in stopping it.

"What do you want?" demanded Godefroid.

"My grandfather's manuscripts!"

"Tell him to go and get them from Monsieur Nicolas."

The young man took that remark for the ferocious jest of a robber dead to all sense of shame, and he sank down in the snow as the cab moved rapidly away. He sprang to his feet again in an outburst of frantic energy, returned home and went to bed, exhausted by his rapid journeys and his broken heart. The next morning Auguste de Mergi awoke alone in those apartments which his mother and grandfather had occupied the day before, and he was overcome by the painful emotions natural to the plight in which he found himself. The profound solitude of rooms but lately so full of life, where every moment had its duty and its task, affected him so painfully, that he went down to ask Mère Vauthier if his grandfather had come during the night or early in the morning, for he had slept very

late, and he imagined that, if Baron Bourlac had returned, the concierge would have informed him of the proceedings against him. She replied with a sneer that he knew well enough where his grandfather was, and that, if he had not come home that morning it was because he was occupying apartments at the château of Clichy. This mockery from a woman who, only the night before, had made so much of him, made the poor boy more frantic than ever, and he hurried away to the hospital on Rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, made desperate by the thought that his grandfather was in prison.

All night Baron Bourlac had prowled about the hospital, where admittance was denied him, and about the residence of Doctor Halpersohn, whom he naturally desired to call to account for such conduct. The doctor did not return home until two in the morning. The old man, who had been at his door at half-past one, had returned to the broad path on the Champs-Elysées and was walking back and forth there; when he returned, at half-past two, the concierge told him that Monsieur Halpersohn had come home and gone to bed, that he was asleep and they did not dare to wake him.

Finding himself in that distant quarter at half-past two in the morning, the poor father, in despair, wandered around the quay, under the rime-laden trees of the by-paths of the Cours-la-Reine, and waited for the dawn. At nine o'clock in the morning he presented himself at the doctor's door, and

asked him why he kept his daughter thus in close confinement.

"Monsieur," replied the doctor, "I told you yesterday that I would answer for your daughter's recovery; but at this moment I am responsible for her life, and you will understand that under those circumstances my power must be supreme. Let me tell you that your daughter took a remedy yesterday which should give her the *plica*, and that, until she has gotten rid of that horrible disease, she will not be visible. I do not propose that any sudden excitement, any lapse in treatment, shall deprive me of my patient and you of your daughter; if you absolutely insist upon seeing her I shall demand a consultation of three physicians for my own protection, for the patient may die."

The old man, overdone with fatigue, fell upon a chair; but he soon rose again.

"Forgive me, monsieur," he said. "I passed the night in horrible distress, waiting for you; you have no idea how dearly I love my daughter, whom I have kept between life and death for fifteen years, and this week of suspense is torture to me!"

The baron left Halpersohn's office, staggering like a drunken man. About an hour after the departure of the old man, whom the Jew doctor had led as far as the stairs, holding his arm, Auguste de Mergi made his appearance. Upon questioning the concierge at the hospital, the poor fellow had learned that the father of the lady brought there the day before had returned during the evening, that he had

asked to see the patient and had spoken of calling upon Doctor Halpersohn in the morning, and that he would undoubtedly hear of him there. Just as Auguste appeared in Halpersohn's study, the doctor was breakfasting on a cup of chocolate and a glass of water, served on a small round table; he did not allow the young man's entrance to disturb him and went on dipping his bread in his chocolate; for he was eating nothing save a roll, cut in four pieces with an accuracy that savored of a surgeon's deftness. Halpersohn had, in fact, done something in surgery in his travels.

"Well, young man," he said, "have you also come to question me about your mother?"

"Yes, monsieur," Auguste replied.

He walked toward the table, where his eyes were dazzled by several piles of gold pieces among a number of bank notes. In the poor child's unhappy plight, the temptation was stronger than his principles, solidly grounded as they were. He saw before him the means of saving his grandfather and the fruits of twenty years' toil, threatened by greedy speculators. He succumbed. The fascination was swift as thought and justified by the idea of self-sacrifice, which pleased the child. He said to himself:

"I shall ruin myself, but I shall save my mother and my grandfather!"

In that hand-to-hand struggle between his good sense and crime, he acquired, as madmen do, a strange, momentary cunning; for, instead of asking

about his grandfather, he fell in with the doctor's humor. Halpersohn, like all shrewd observers, had made an accurate guess at the past life of the old man, and of the child and his mother. He foresaw or caught a glimpse of the truth which the Baronne de Mergi's conversation vaguely revealed to him, and the result was a sort of kindly feeling for his new patients; of respect or admiration he was incapable.

"Well, my dear boy," he said to the young baron, in a familiar tone, "I am taking care of your mother for you, and I will give her back to you young and lovely and in good health. She is one of the few patients in whom doctors take an interest; moreover, she is a country-woman of mine through her mother. You and your grandfather must be men enough to go two weeks without seeing—madame—?"

"La Baronne de Mergi."

"If she is a baroness, you must be a baron?" queried Halpersohn.

At that moment the theft was accomplished. While the doctor was looking at his bit of bread saturated with chocolate, Auguste seized four folded notes and put them in his trousers pocket, as if he were putting his hand there for greater ease of manner.

"Yes, monsieur, I am a baron. My grandfather is a baron too; he was procureur-général under the Restoration."

"You blush, young man; you mustn't blush

because, being a baron, you are poor—that is very common."

"Who told you that we are poor, monsieur?"

"Why, your grandfather told me that he passed the night in the Champs-Elysées; and although I know of no palace where there is so beautiful a ceiling as that which shone over the Champs-Elysées at two o'clock this morning, I assure you that it was cold where your grandfather was walking. People don't select the *Hôtel de la Belle Etoile** from choice."

"Has my grandfather just left you?" said Auguste, seizing upon that excuse to take his leave. "I thank you, monsieur, and, if you will permit me, I will come to inquire for my mother."

Once out of the house the young baron went to the bailiff's office, taking a cab in order to reach his destination more speedily, and paid his grandfather's debt. The bailiff handed him the notes and a receipt for the costs, then bade the young man take one of his clerks with him in order to discharge the keeper.

"As Messieurs Barbet and Métivier live in your quarter," he added, "my young man will carry them the money and tell them to hand you the mortgage."

Auguste, who understood none of those terms or formalities, did as he was told. He received seven hundred francs in change, out of the four thousand, and went away with the clerk. He entered the cab

* That is, the open air.

in an indescribable condition of bewilderment; for, now that the result was obtained, the remorse began, and he imagined himself disgraced, cursed by his grandfather, whose inflexibility was well known to him; and he believed that his mother would die of grief when she knew of what he had been guilty. The whole face of nature changed in his eyes. He was burning hot, he did not see the snow, the houses seemed like spectres to him. When he reached home, the young baron formed his plan, which certainly indicated honesty of purpose: he went to his mother's room and took the diamond-studded snuff-box that the Emperor had given his grandfather, with the intention of sending it to Doctor Halpersohn together with the seven hundred francs and the following letter, which required several rough drafts:

"MONSIEUR,

"The results of twenty years' toil on my grandfather's part were on the point of being swallowed up by usurers who threatened his liberty. Three thousand three hundred francs would save him, and, seeing so much money on your table, I was unable to resist the temptation to set my grandfather free and at the same time restore to him the fruits of his vigils. I borrowed from you, without your consent, four thousand francs; but as only three thousand three hundred francs were needed, I send you the other seven hundred, and I send with them a snuff-box set with diamonds, given to my grandfather by the Emperor, the value of which will make up the difference.

"Even if you should not believe in the honorable motives of him who will always look upon you as his benefactor,—if you will deign to say nothing concerning an act that would

be unjustifiable under any other circumstances, you will save my grandfather as well as my mother, and I shall be your devoted slave as long as I live.

"AUGUSTE DE MERGI."

About half-past two, Auguste, who had walked as far as the Champs-Elysées, sent a messenger to Doctor Halpersohn's door with a sealed box containing ten louis, a bank-note for five hundred francs and the snuff-box; then he returned home slowly on foot, by Pont d'Iéna, the Invalides and the boulevards, relying upon Doctor Halpersohn's generosity. The doctor, who had discovered the theft, had at once changed his opinion concerning his clients. He believed that the old man had come for the purpose of robbing him, and that, having been unsuccessful, he had sent the boy. He conceived doubts as to the titles they assumed, and he went at once to the office of the king's attorney to enter a complaint, requesting that they should be prosecuted at once.

The prudence with which the law proceeds rarely allows such swift progress as the aggrieved parties desire; but, about three o'clock, a commissioner of police, accompanied by several officers who sauntered up and down the boulevards, was interrogating Mère Vauthier concerning her tenants, and the widow unwittingly added to the commissioner's suspicions.

Népomucène, who had a keen scent for police agents, supposed that they had come to arrest the old man; and, as he was devoted to Auguste, he

hurried away to warn Monsieur Bernard, whom he discovered on Avenue de l'Observatoire.

"Run away, monsieur!" he cried, "they've come to arrest you. The bailiffs are hiding in your room; they've seized everything. Mère Vauthier, who kept some stamped papers away from you, said you'd sleep at Clichy to-night or to-morrow. Look, do you see those fellows?"

A glance was sufficient to enable the ex-procureur-général to recognize bailiff's followers in the police agents, and he divined what had happened.

"What of Monsieur Godefroid?"

"Gone for good. Mère Vauthier says he was a spy for your enemies."

The baron at once determined to see Barbet, and he was at his house of business within a quarter of an hour: the former publisher lived on Rue Sainte Catherine d'Enfer.

"Ah! you have come for your mortgage?" said he, returning his victim's salutation; "here it is."

And, to Baron Bourlac's unbounded amazement, he handed him the document.

"I do not understand," he said, as he took it.

"Wasn't it you who paid me?" rejoined the publisher.

"You say you have been paid?"

"Your grandson carried the money to the bailiff this morning."

"Is it true that you levied on me yesterday?"

"You hadn't been at home for two days, had you?" demanded Barbet; "a procureur-général

ought to know what arrest on mesne process means."

When he heard that phrase, the baron bowed coldly to Barbet and returned homeward, concluding that the officers must be there in search of the two authors in hiding on the second floor. He walked slowly, absorbed by vague forebodings of evil; for, as he proceeded, Népomucène's words seemed more and more obscure and inexplicable to him. Could Godefroid really have betrayed him? He turned instinctively into Rue Notre-Dame des Champs and went in at the low door, which happened to be open. In the passage he stumbled upon Népomucène.

"Oh! monsieur, come quick! They're taking Monsieur Auguste away to prison! They caught him on the boulevard; he's the one they were looking for; they've been asking him questions—"

The old man leaped forward like a tiger, and flew through the house and garden to the boulevard, like an arrow from a bow. He arrived in time to see his grandson entering a cab, surrounded by three men.

"Auguste," he cried, "what does this mean?"

The young man burst into tears and fainted.

"Monsieur, I am Baron Bourlac, once procureur-général," said the baron to the commissioner of police, whose official scarf caught his eye; "in pity's name, explain this to me!"

"If you are Baron Bourlac, monsieur, you will understand the whole thing in two words: I have just questioned this young man, and unluckily he has confessed—"

"What?"

"The theft of four thousand francs from Doctor Halpersohn."

"Is it possible, Auguste?"

"I sent him your diamond snuff-box for security, grandpa. I wanted to save you from the disgrace of going to prison!"

"Unhappy boy, what have you done?" cried the baron. "The diamonds are false, I sold the genuine ones three years ago."

The commissioner of police and his clerk exchanged a meaning glance. That glance, which said many things, surprised and overwhelmed Baron Bourlac.

"Monsieur le Commissaire," he said, "never fear, I will go and see the king's attorney; but you can bear witness to the fact that I have deceived my grandson and my daughter. You must do your duty; but, in the name of humanity, release my grandson. I will go to prison. Where are you taking him?"

"Are you Baron Bourlac?" demanded the commissioner.

"Yes, monsieur."

"Monsieur le procureur du roi, the examining magistrate and myself could not believe that such people as you and your grandson could be guilty of this offense, and we agreed with the doctor that some knaves must have borrowed your names."

He led the baron aside.

"You went to Doctor Halpersohn's this morning?" he asked.

"Yes, monsieur."

"And your grandson went there half an hour later?"

"I cannot say, monsieur, for I have just come home and I haven't seen my grandson since yesterday."

"The summonses he showed us and the envelope explain the whole thing," said the commissioner, "and I know the motive of the crime. Monsieur, I ought to arrest you as your grandson's confederate, for your replies substantiate the facts alleged in the complaint; but the documents which have been served upon you, and which I return to you," he said, handing the baron a package of stamped papers which he held in his hand, "prove that you are really Baron Bourlac. However, be ready to appear before Monsieur Marest, the examining magistrate who has this affair in charge. I think it my duty to relax the usual rigor of the law in consideration of your former position. As for your grandson, I will speak to Monsieur le procureur du roi when I return, and we shall have all possible consideration for the grandson of a former first president, the victim of a youthful error. But there has been a complaint, the culprit has confessed, I have prepared a return and there is a warrant for his arrest; I can do nothing. As for the place of confinement, we shall take your grandson to the Conciergerie."

"Thanks, monsieur," said the unhappy Bourlac.

He fell flat in the snow and rolled into one of the basins that then separated the trees along the boulevard.

The commissioner called for help and Népomucène ran to the spot with Mère Vauthier. They carried the old man to his room and Dame Vauthier requested the commissioner, as he passed through Rue d'Enfer to send Doctor Berton as quickly as possible.

"What is the matter with my grandfather?" asked poor Auguste.

"He is mad, monsieur!—That's what comes of stealing!"

Auguste tried to beat his head against the side of the cab, but the two agents held him.

"Come, come, young man, be calm!" said the commissioner, "be calm! You have done wrong, but it isn't beyond repair."

"But, monsieur, I beg you tell that woman that my grandfather probably has had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours!"

"Oh! the poor creatures!" muttered the commissioner.

He stopped the cab, and said a word in the ear of his secretary, who ran and spoke to Dame Vauthier, and returned at once.

*

Monsieur Berton decided that the illness of Monsieur Bernard—for he knew him by no other name—was a violent attack of fever; but after the widow Vauthier had narrated, in true concierge style, the events that had caused his condition, he deemed it his duty to inform Monsieur Alain of the state of affairs the following morning, and Monsieur Alain at once wrote a line to Monsieur Nicolas on Rue Chanoinesse, and sent it by a messenger.

When Godefroid returned, on the preceding evening, he had handed the notes and citations to Monsieur Nicolas, who passed the greater part of the night reading the first volume of Baron Bourlac's work.

The next morning Madame de la Chanterie informed the novice that, if he still held to his determination, he was to set to work at once. Godefroid, being enlightened by her as to the financial secrets of the association, worked seven or eight hours a day for several months, under the supervision of Frédéric Mongenod, who came every Sunday to examine his work, and from whom he received hearty praise.

"You are a valuable acquisition to the saints with whom you live," he said, when all the accounts were systematized and properly opened. "Now, two or three hours a day will suffice to keep the

books in running order, and the rest of the time you can assist your friends, if you still have the inclination you manifested six months ago."

It was then the month of July, 1838. During the whole time that had passed since the episode of Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, Godefroid, who was resolved to show himself worthy of his friends, had not asked a single question concerning Baron Bourlac; for, as he never heard the name mentioned, and as he found no reference to the affair among the papers, he concluded that the silence maintained concerning the two persecutors of Madame de la Chanterie's family, was intended either as a test for him to undergo, or as a proof that that sublime woman's friends had avenged her.

He had, it is true, walked as far as Boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, about two months after the discovery of Monsieur Bernard's identity, had succeeded in meeting the widow Vauthier and had questioned her concerning the family.

"As if anyone knew what's become of those people, my dear Monsieur Godefroid!—Two days after your exploit—for it was you, you fox, that whispered in my landlord's ear,—some men came here and rid us of that stuck-up old fool. Bah! they moved everything out inside of twenty-four hours, and that's the end of 'em! No one would say a word to me. I believe he's gone to Algiers with his thief of a grandson; for Népomucène, who had a weak spot for the thief—indeed, he isn't

much better himself—couldn't find him at the Conciergerie, and he's the only one who knows where they are; the little rascal has run away from me. That comes of bringing up foundlings! that's the way they reward you, by making trouble for you. I haven't been able to find anybody yet to take his place; and as the quarter's filling up, the whole house is let and I'm worn out with work."

Godefroid would never have known anything more concerning Baron Bourlac, except for one of the accidental meetings that so often happen in Paris, and the resulting conclusion of the episode.

In the month of September, Godefroid was walking down Avenue des Champs-Elysées, and as he passed Rue Marbeuf, Doctor Halpersohn came to his mind.

"I ought to go and see him," he said to himself, "and see if he cured Bourlac's daughter! What a voice and what talent she had! She intended to devote her life to God!"

When he reached the crossing, Godefroid hurried across because of the swiftly-moving carriages, and he jostled a young man who had a young lady on his arm.

"Take care!" cried the young man; "are you blind?"

"What, is it you?" rejoined Godefroid, recognizing Auguste de Mergi.

Auguste was so well dressed, so dandified, and so proud to have the lady on his arm, that the novice would not have recognized him, except for

the memories with which his mind was filled at the moment.

"Why! it is our dear Monsieur Godefroid!" said the lady.

When he heard the divine notes of Vanda's heavenly voice, and saw that she was actually walking, Godefroid's feet were nailed to the spot where he stood.

"Cured!" he exclaimed.

"Ten days ago he allowed me to walk!" she replied.

"Halpersohn?"

"Yes.—And how is it that you have not been to see us?" she continued. "But you did well! My hair was cut off only a week ago! What you see now is a wig; but the doctor gave me his word that it would grow again!—How many things we have to say to each other! Come and dine with us, pray! Oh! your accordion! O monsieur!"

She put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I shall keep it all my life! My son will preserve it as a sacred relic! My father has hunted Paris over for you; he is searching for his unknown benefactors too, and he will die of disappointment if you do not help him to find them. He is consumed by black melancholy, which I cannot overcome every day."

Fascinated by the voice of that lovely creature rescued from the grave as well as by the voice of a devouring curiosity, Godefroid offered his arm to receive the hand that the Baronne de Mergi held

IN THE CHAMPS-ELYSÉES

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"Why! it is our dear Monsieur Godefroid!" said the lady.

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out; she sent her son ahead after giving him his instructions with a movement of the head, which he seemed to understand.

"I am not taking you very far, we live on Allée d'Antin in a pretty house of the English pattern; we occupy the whole of it; each of us has a floor. Oh! we are very comfortable. My father believes that you have much to do with the happiness by which we are overwhelmed!"

"I?"

"Do you not know that, upon a report from the Minister of Public Instruction, they have created a professorship of legislation for him, like that at the Sorbonne? My father is to begin his first course of lectures in November. The great work he was engaged upon will appear in a month; the house of Cavalier is to publish it, dividing the profits with father, and they have advanced him thirty thousand francs on account of his share; so he is thinking of buying the house we now live in. The Department of Justice allows me a pension of twelve hundred francs, as the daughter of a former magistrate; father has his pension of three thousand francs and five thousand as professor. We are so economical that we are almost rich. My Auguste is going to begin his law studies in two months; but he is a clerk now in the procureur-général's office, and earns twelve hundred francs. Ah! Monsieur Godefroid, do not speak of my poor Auguste's unfortunate affair. I bless him every morning for what he did, but his grandfather hasn't forgiven him yet! His

mother blesses him, Halpersohn adores him and the ex-procureur-général is implacable!"

"What affair?" said Godefroid.

"Ah! I recognize your generous nature in that!" cried Vanda. "What a noble heart you have! Your mother must be proud of you."

She stopped, as if she had felt a pain in her heart.

"I swear to you that I know nothing whatever about the affair you mention," said Godefroid.

"Really, you have not heard of it?"

In artless fashion she told the story of Auguste's forced loan from the doctor, lauding her son's action.

"If we may not mention the subject before Baron Bourlac," said Godefroid, "pray tell us how your son escaped the consequences."

"Why," replied Vanda, "I told you, I think, that he is now a clerk to the procureur-général, who is most kind to him. He remained only forty-eight hours in the Conciergerie, where he was lodged in the governor's apartments. The good doctor, who did not receive Auguste's beautiful, sublime letter until the evening, withdrew his complaint; and through the intervention of a former president of one of the royal courts, whom my father has never seen, the procureur-général annulled the report of the commissioner of police and the warrant. In fact there is no trace of the affair in existence, elsewhere than in my heart, in my son's conscience and in the mind of his grandfather, who, since that day, always calls Auguste *you* instead of *thou*, and treats him like a stranger. No later than yesterday

Halpersohn was asking forgiveness for him; but my father, who refuses even me, whom he loves so dearly, replied: 'You are the person he robbed, you can and should forgive; but I am responsible for the thief—and, when I was procureur-général, I never forgave!'—'You will kill your daughter!' said Halpersohn; I was listening. My father said nothing."

"But who has helped you?"

"A gentleman whom we believe to be employed to distribute the queen's bounty."

"What sort of man is he?" asked Godefroid.

"He is a thin, solemn-faced, melancholy man, of the same general type as father. It was he who had my father taken to the house where we now live, when he had the attack of fever. Just imagine that, as soon as father recovered, I was taken from the hospital to that same house and comfortably settled in my room, as if I had never left it. Halpersohn, whom the tall gentleman had won over, I don't know how, told me then of all the suffering father had undergone: the diamonds from his snuff-box sold! and father and son, most of the time without a crust and pretending to be rich in my presence! O Monsieur Godefroid, those two are genuine martyrs. What can I say to my father? I can only do to both of them as they have done to me, by suffering for them."

"Has this tall gentleman something of a military air?"

"Ah! you know him!" cried Vanda, as they reached the door of the house.

She seized Godefroid's hand with the convulsive strength of a woman suffering from a nervous attack, she dragged him into a salon, the door of which stood open, and cried:

"Father, Monsieur Godefroid knows our benefactor!"

Baron Bourlac, dressed in a costume befitting a former magistrate of such high rank, rose and offered Godefroid his hand.

"I suspected as much!" he said.

Godefroid made a gesture intended to disclaim any share in the results of that noble revenge; but the ex-procureur-général did not give him time to speak.

"Ah! monsieur," he continued, "only Providence is more powerful, only love more ingenious, only maternal affection more clear-sighted than your friends, who have some of the characteristics of those three great divinities. I bless the chance to which we owe our meeting; for Monsieur Joseph has disappeared forever, and as he succeeded in avoiding all the traps that I set to learn his true name and his residence, I should have died of chagrin at last. See, here is his letter. But do you know him?"

Godefroid read the following lines:

"Monsieur le Baron Bourlac, the sums which we have expended for you, under the instructions of a charitable lady, amount to fifteen thousand francs. Make a note of the amount, so that they may be repaid, either by yourself or by your descendants, when the circumstances of your family permit; for it is the money of the poor. When this restitution

is possible, pay the amount of your indebtedness at the banking house of Mongenod Frères. May God forgive you your sins!"

The signature to the letter was most mysterious, consisting of five crosses. Godefroid returned it to the baron.

"The five crosses are there!" he said to himself.

"Ah! monsieur," said the old man, "you know all about it, you were once this mysterious lady's agent—tell me her name."

"Her name!" cried Godefroid, "her name! Never ask it, unhappy man! never seek to learn it!—Ah! madame," he continued, taking Madame de Mergi's trembling hands in his, "if you care for your father's reason, see to it that he remains in his ignorance, that he does not take the slightest step!"

Father, daughter and Auguste were transfixed with wonder.

"Who is she?" asked Vanda.

"Very well, if you insist," replied Godefroid, gazing fixedly at the old man, "the woman who has saved your daughter, who has restored her to you, young and fair and blooming with renewed life, who has snatched her from the coffin; the woman who spared you the disgrace of your grandson, who has made your old age happy and honored, who has saved you all three—"

He paused.

"Is a woman whom you sent, although innocent, to prison for twenty years!" he cried, hurling the words at Baron Bourlac; "upon whom you, as

procureur-général, heaped the most cruel insults, whose sanctity you outraged, and from whose arms you tore a lovely daughter, to consign her to the most horrible of deaths—for she was guillotined!"

Seeing that Vanda had fallen, fainting, upon a chair, Godefroid rushed into the hall, thence into Allée d'Antin, and ran away at the top of his speed.

"If you want to be forgiven," said Baron Bourlac to his grandson, "follow that man and find out where he lives!"

Auguste darted away like an arrow.

The next morning, at half-past eight, Baron Bourlac knocked at the old yellow gate of the Hôtel de la Chanterie on Rue Chanoinesse. He inquired for Madame de la Chanterie and the concierge pointed to the steps. Luckily it was the breakfast hour and Godefroid spied the baron in the court-yard, through one of the windows by which the staircase was lighted; he had barely time to hurry downstairs, burst into the salon, where the whole household was assembled, and cry out:

"Baron Bourlac!"

When she heard that name, Madame de la Chanterie withdrew to her room, supported by Abbé de Vèze.

"You sha'n't come in, you limb of Satan!" cried Manon, who recognized the procureur-général, and took her stand in front of the door of the salon. "Have you come to kill Madame?"

"Nonsense, Manon, let monsieur pass," said Monsieur Alain.

Manon sank upon a chair as if both legs had given way at once.

"Messieurs," said the baron in a voice expressive of the most profound emotion, as he recognized Godefroid and Monsieur Joseph and saluted the two others, "benevolence confers some rights upon its object!"

"You owe us nothing, monsieur," said honest Alain, "you owe everything to God."

"You are saints and you have the tranquillity of saints," rejoined the ex-magistrate. "You will listen to me! I know that the more than human benefactions that have been heaped upon me in the past eighteen months are the work of a person whom I seriously wounded in the discharge of my duty; it was fifteen years before I was satisfied of her innocence, and that, gentlemen, is the only thing in my official career for which I feel remorse. Listen! I have but little time to live, but I shall lose that little, still so necessary to the welfare of my children whom Madame de la Chanterie has saved, if I cannot obtain my pardon from her. Messieurs, I will remain on the steps of Notre-Dame, on my knees, until she says a word to me.—I will await her there. I will kiss her footprints, I will find tears to move her heart, although my child's sufferings have drained my heart as dry as straw."

The door of Madame de la Chanterie's room opened, Abbé de Vèze glided out like a shadow, and said to Monsieur Joseph:

"That voice is killing Madame!"

"Ah! is she there? did she go that way?" exclaimed Baron Bourlac.

He fell on his knees, kissed the floor, burst into tears, and cried in a heartrending voice:

"In the name of Jesus, who died on the Cross, forgive me! forgive me! for my daughter has suffered a thousand deaths!"

The old man was so prostrated, that the moved spectators believed him dead. At that moment Madame de la Chanterie appeared like a ghost at the door of her chamber, and leaned, trembling, against the door-frame.

"By Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette, whom I see upon their scaffold, by Madame Elisabeth, by my daughter, by your daughter, by Jesus Christ, I forgive you!"

At the last words the former magistrate raised his eyes and said:

"Thus do the angels revenge themselves!"

Monsieur Joseph and Monsieur Nicolas assisted Baron Bourlac to rise, and led him into the court-yard; Godefroid went to call a cab, and when it arrived, Monsieur Nicolas said, as he helped the old man to enter:

"Do not come here again, monsieur; if you do, you will kill the mother too, for God's power is infinite, but human nature has its limits."

That same day Godefroid was admitted to the order of the Brethren of Consolation.

Vierzchovnia, Ukraine, December, 1847.

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